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BOOK REVIEWS

EDITORIAL

Despite the oft-repeated aphorism that the one who forgets history is condemned to repeat it, there is increasing scepticism among historians about whether, and in what ways, the past can be appropriated at all. There is the problem, first, of uncovering the past. Second, even if and when data from the past can be assembled, the usefulness of the past for the present remains elusive. Anyone choosing to examine, for instance,premodern attitudes in western Christendom toward such matters as abandoned children and homosexuality faces these two problems.

Gavin Ferriby, a Ph.D. candidate in church history, chose to do just this, however, in his 1996 *Koinonia* Fall Forum address, *"An Archaeology of Flesh and Blood: John Boswell's Books, Sources and Critics."* Through an examination of Boswell's *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality*, *Kindness of Strangers*, and *Same-Sex Unions in Premodern Europe*, and the critical response to those works, Ferriby asked what can be known of medieval and premodern Christian concerns about abandoned children and especially homosexuality. Boswell's "central interpretive attempt," in Ferriby's words, was to "characterize and enliven the 'soft issues' of organic human beings of the distant past."

With regard to homosexuality, Boswell made the claims that it is legitimate to speak of "gay" people and relationships during the Roman period and that the early church did not oppose homosexual behavior. Boswell's latter claim sparked an almost universally outraged protest from reviewers who charged that he was too eager to impose his own ideology on a paucity of evidence. In seeking to refute Boswell's critics, Ferriby addressed two concerns. With regard to the evidence at Boswell's disposal, Ferriby acknowledged that data is hard to come by. And yet, Ferriby said,

this is a given in historical research. Moreover, if even supposedly hard, objective evidence such as legal documents, laws, and letters is difficult to decipher, how much harder is it to understand "love, procreation, and holiness!" Boswell cannot therefore be faulted, in Ferriby's view, for lack of evidence because Boswell was trying to uncover communities of flesh and blood where evidence is always hard to come by.

The second concern addressed by Ferriby was that Boswell's critics were driven by what Ferriby sees as a misdirected concern to say that because homosexuality has been condemned historically by Christian churches, it must continue to be condemned in the present. Here Ferriby took on the notion of a "usable past" and the view that Christian doctrine develops organically from a pure and orthodox origin. In contrast to an approach that seeks to use the criterion of orthodoxy as expressed by church elites, Ferriby urged attention to Boswell's belief that history should "retrieve from the margins of history the scribbled lives of the poor, the ordinary, the unaristocratic, the non-strategic, the apolitical." So perhaps, there is some use to history after all, for Ferriby, provided that it is an archaeology of flesh and blood.

Kevin Reilly, a New Testament Ph.D. candidate, challenged common assumptions about orthodoxy and the commonly cited biblical argument that homosexuality is "unnatural" in his response to Ferriby's paper entitled, *"The God of Unnatural Acts: An Orthodox Interpretation."* The orthodox person, according to Reilly, is one who "rather than privileging certain authorized voices and perspectives, instead lifts up and gives voice to the discordant and subversive." The orthodoxy of giving voice to the oppressed is affirmed, in Reilly's view, by none other than God who, according to St. Paul, acted "contrary to nature" (Romans 11:23-24) in offering salvation to the Gentile world. Thus, the words of Paul in Romans 1:26 that homosexuals act "contrary to nature" must be understood in terms of God who acts against nature. In Reilly's view, therefore, God's own salvific purpose provides an orthodox basis on which to accept those who act against nature.

Ivica Novakovic, a Ph.D. candidate in philosophy, focused on Ferriby's views on the historian's usage of language in, *"Work on Symbols: A Response to Gavin Ferriby."* Novakovic sought to elaborate on the "epistemic and ethical status" of language about the past. For Novakovic, the historians and theologians of the church "should look more closely at the actual conditions of our societies before engaging in

attempts at theologically formulating and developing further the realistic religious symbol-system which would be adequate to the present-day pluralistic world."

Marianne O. Rhebergen, an interdisciplinary Ph.D. candidate in church history and practical theology, highlighted in her response, *"Questions in an On-going Discussion,"* a number of questions that were raised by Ferriby's essay. Specifically, her questions revolved around the tasks of what Ferriby called "ecclesiastical history" and "ecclesiastical historians." Rhebergen was particularly concerned about the ways that ecclesiastical historians might justify their use of language. She suggested further that it is necessary to view historians as rhetors—those who seek to persuade a specific audience. This would require, in Rhebergens' view, more attention to the way historians are participants in a conversation involving three different audiences: society, the academy, and the church.

Although attention to the marginalized in history often focuses on the notion of oppression, Haruko Nawata Ward, a Ph.D. candidate in church history, also saw room for optimism in such an approach. In, *"Wounded Flesh and Bleeding Little Toes,"* she pointed out that "church history not only encompasses the bones, the theories, and the structure [of history] but also allows room for dreams." Ward saw in Ferriby's articulation of an archaeology of flesh and blood an opportunity for historical imaginiation to be used alongside a hermeneutics of suspicion. However, an ecclesiastical history of this kind must be willing, in Ward's view, to feel the pain of individuals when skins of historical layers are peeled back. But by refusing to reduce these layers to one flat dimension, it becomes possible, according to Ward, to feel not only pain but to bring healing.

— WESLEY W. SMITH
Executive editor

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An Archeology of Flesh and Blood
John Boswell's Books, Sources, and Critics
A Bibliographical Review Esssay

GAVIN FERRIBY

(1)

In 1980 and 1994 John Boswell, late professor of history at Yale University, wrote two books on the subject of Christianity and homosexuality. *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality* (Boswell 1980; hereafter *CSTH*) earned its author a life-long reputation as *enfant terrible* (he published it when he was 35) with its bold claim that Christians had not always maintained an unchanging, unambiguous view that homosexual acts and orientations are sinful. *Same-Sex Unions in Premodern Europe* (Boswell 1994a; hereafter *SSU*) renewed the disputes occasioned by his earlier book with its claim that some late antique and medieval Christians, particularly in Eastern churches, had celebrated liturgical union ceremonies between persons of the same sex which suggested strong gay or lesbian overtones. Both books offered fresh readings of well-known texts as well as editions and interpretations of previously little-known texts. Boswell's evidence, interpretations, and terms of argument occasioned favorable and hostile discussions in both semi-popular and scholarly venues.

To sum up, traditionalist Catholics and conservative Protestants hated these books; medievalists were divided in their opinions; more liberal Protestants and gay and lesbian reviewers sometimes used Boswell's scholarship, rightly or wrongly, to promulgate their own points of view. *The Nation* liked them and *Christianity Today* did not: no news there. The reviewer who attempts to build a bibliographical essay on such critical reception is likely to repeat Benedick's misconstruing Beatrice' message in Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*: "Ha! 'Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner.' There's a double meaning in that." (II.iii.251)

Between *CSTH* and *SSU* Boswell published another book, *The Kindness of Strangers: the Abandonment of Children in Western Europe from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance* (1988; hereafter *KOS*). The critical reception of this book was much milder; to the popular press, after all, gay and lesbian people are sexy and abandoned children are not. *KOS* however continued Boswell's central interpretive attempt to characterize and enliven the "soft tissues" of organic human beings of the distant past, that is, their loves, their growth, how their brains "directed movement and invested life with meaning" (Boswell 1988:5). Methodologically, *KOS* followed paths substantially similar to *CSTH* and *SSU*. All three books are arranged similarly, contain appendices of translations, and begin with terminological and lexical discussions which seek to situate crucial concepts in late-Roman frameworks. In addition, *KOS* reveals some past Christians' behavior to have been highly unpleasant according to contemporary norms.

Why was *KOS* accorded critical respect and sobriety when the other two books were not? The far less heated critical reception accorded to *KOS* cannot be attributed solely to the contents of the other two books and the historical claims made in them. Nor can the critical reception of *CSTH* and *SSU* be regarded (with a few exceptions) only as the products of anti-gay prejudice or bigotry, although such feelings certainly influenced certain reviewers (see more below).

This review essay will attempt to trace important methodological questions for the pursuit of historical studies about emotionally laden contemporary topics by examining the tumultuous reception and disparate reputations of Boswell's three major books. In order to set such questions in context, this essay will first examine selected scholarly disputes occasioned by *CSTH*, since its critical reception suggests patterns of critical reception regarding the latter two. *KOS* and *SSU* will then be examined in less detail. In closing, this essay will attempt to spin out ramifications about

the place of ecclesiastical history in the contemporary theological curriculum.

Since these books have involved so much controversy, let these ground rules be stated beforehand. Regardless of the attitudes of Boswell's critics, in this text positive assessments of Boswell's evidence and interpretation do not constitute "special pleading" for any particular social group (any more than respectful and accurate delineation of St. Augustine's ideas about grace constitute "special pleading" for Catholicism). In this text negative assessments of Boswell's evidence or interpretation do not necessarily constitute a major critical attack on his books, nor necessarily disconfirm his theses. Neither positive nor negative critical assessments of Boswell's evidence and interpretation necessarily entail any *theological* conclusions in this text.[1] (Certain critics may believe otherwise, and speak for themselves.)

(2)

Boswell's central claim in *CSTH* is not easy to locate in convenient form. Boswell sought to refute "the common idea that religious belief—Christian or other— has been the *cause* of intolerance in regard to gay people" (Boswell 1980:6). The topic of homosexuality (both in Boswell's texts and in the reviewers) often seems to overshadow the topic of intolerance, of which homosexuality is a case study (Shelp 1982:256). At the book's end Boswell briefly summarizes that (1) Roman society did not generally distinguish gay people from others and regarded homosexual interest as ordinary; (2) the early church did not appear to oppose homosexual behavior *per se*; (3) hostility to gay people increased during the dis-

[1] Martha Nussbaum's logical exposure of fallacious arguments about legitimizing academic study is well worth repeating: "(1) For all x and all y, if y defends x as a legitimate area of study, y is (whether openly or secretly) a member of x; and (2) for all x and all y, if y defends a claim of justice involving a member of x, y is (whether openly or secretly) a member of x." Such fallacies would suggest, in the theological curriculum, that every professor of Hebrew Bible is secretly a Jew, and that every professor of Christian Ethics who argues against Christian anti-Semitism is a secret Jew, or that every male professor who seeks to encorporate feminist-originated insights into his teaching is secretly a woman. See her "The Softness of Reason: A Classical Case for Gay Studies," *The New Republic* 207 (July 13 & 20, 1992): 26-35.

solution of the Roman state; (4) gay people were rarely visible during the early Middle Ages and moral theology treated homosexual behavior as comparable at worst to heterosexual fornication; (5) the revival of urban culture was accompanied by a reappearance of gay literature and a visible and substantial gay minority which left a permanent mark on the culture of the age; (6) in the latter half of the twelfth century virulent hostility began to appear which coincided with the rise of intolerance towards other groups (such as Jews and heretics) and was reflected in and perpetuated by the theological, moral, and legal compilations of the later Middle Ages which influenced European society for centuries afterward (Boswell 1980:233-234).

One need only glance through the bibliography of *CSTH* to learn what an advance Boswell's 1980 book was over anything which had been written up to that time (Boswell 1980:4, 403-409). His basic narrative thread assembled an impressive array of texts, languages, terms, and methods. Several reviewers noted how far Boswell had raised the level of discussion of late antique and medieval homosexuality (Christiansen 1981:854; Grant 1981:60; Linehan 1981:73; Henry 1982:448; Hauerwas 1985:229; Sheehan 1985:441). Several years elapsed after publication before the main objections of reviewers crystalized, in large part because Boswell's book ranged across such a breadth of linguistic, interpretive, and evidentiary competencies that it was not (and is not) easy to digest in detail. In retrospect, objections clustered around several foci and terms noted above.

Boswell's fundamental claim, that Christianity (or any other religion) has not been the *cause* of intolerance towards gay people, met a hostile reception from two very different critical camps. On the one hand, Christian scholars from several traditions regarded Boswell's claim as flying in the face of normative Christian tradition as promulgated by ecclesiastical authorities on the basis of Scripture and doctrine. David F. Wright concluded there was "little room for debate: homosexual behaviour was contrary to the will of God as expressed in Scripture and nature"(1989:333). Richard John Neuhaus concluded that Boswell provided "snips and pieces of 'evidence' divorced from their historical contexts and ... a fanciful interpretation that serves the argument being advanced" (1994:59). Despite their (largely rhetorical) arguments, these two authors (and others like them) essentially presented the tautology that because "orthodox" Christians now do not countenace homosexual activity, therefore they never could have done so in the past, and because they did not do so in the past,

therefore they cannot do so now. Boswell's challenge of their received view of the Christian past therefore not only may be wrong, but *must* be wrong.

On the other hand, several gay scholars were equally dismissive from a diametrically opposed viewpoint, namely that Christianity most definitely *has been* (and by tautology *must have been*) the cause of intolerance towards gay people. The now-defunct Gay Academic Union issued a blistering attack on Boswell's spurious defense of Christianity from obvious association with centuries of hatred and violence; such mindless bigotry in the West could have had no other cause (Gay Academic Union 1981: 1 and *passim*; see also Boswell 1982:8) Such critics also vociferously criticized Boswell's use of the word "gay" to apply to persons in the distant past (1981:10), insofar as sexual categories (in one line of thinking) are produced by capitalist societies (Padgug 1979:13).

It is this second criticism which opens up methodological issues in the examination of historical sources. While such issues will be discussed further below, it is striking in retrospect how one of Boswell's major innovations, the use of the word "gay" in his subtitle (and carefully discussed throughout his text: see 43-46) is by now a commonplace. Whatever else Boswell's first book may have accomplished, or however it may be criticized, it demonstrated that persons who focused their sexual attentions primarily upon other persons of the same gender did in fact exist in the distant past and could be discussed historically using widely understood terms such as "gay" or "lesbian." Such terms, although they refer to varying combinations of behaviors, could facilitate study more than obfuscate it.

Boswell's first substantive historical claim, (that Roman society did not generally distinguish gay people from others and regarded homosexual interest as ordinary) generally has not occasioned widespread objection (but see MacMullen 1982; Lilja 1982; Cantarella 1987, 1992; Dalla 1987; Hallet 1987;and Halperin's critcism 1990). It is now widely accepted that most ancient city-states (including Rome) considered particular sexual desires of little public and ethical concern, except when they interfered with the duties and privileges of citizenship for adult males who were citizens (Boswell 1993). Boswell later clarified his view that ancient Rome as a *society* appears "to have been blind to the issue of sexual object choice, but it is not clear that individuals were unaware of distinctions in the matter" (Boswell 1983:98). Many traditional Christian accounts of ancient Rome have essentially followed (or preceded) Gibbon's view of Roman

excess and moral degeneracy, and from such a viewpoint little of consequence hangs on the moral status of Roman perceptions.

Boswell's second claim, however, immediately occasioned heated controversy. (This was that the early church did not appear to oppose homosexual behavior *per se*.) Specifically, Boswell claimed that Christian Scriptures do not supply a blanket condemnation of homosexual acts (as often assumed) and that the Fathers were not greatly occupied with or distressed by such acts. Insofar as the New Testament (and patristic authority) is usually invoked as the major premise of the argument that contemporary churches should not alter their traditional condemnation of homosexual persons and acts, Boswell's views (stated in such detail and length) constituted a challenge to those who agreed with the "traditionalist" position. (The actual status of Christian tradition both as content and as process is implicitly at stake here.)

Controversy centered on Boswell's appendix, "Lexicography and Saint Paul," to which David F. Wright wrote a somewhat confused and logically discontinuous response (1984). While this essay is not the place to rehearse every technical argument (and there are many), his basic point was that the Greek term 'arsenokoitai' (cf. 1 Cor. 6:9 and 1 Tim. 1:10) speaks "generically of male activity with males rather than specifically categorized male sexual engagement with *paides*" (i.e., that the word speaks of homosexual acts and orientation rather than more specifically male prostitution), and "a broader study of early Christian attitudes to homosexuality would confirm this" (D.F. Wright 1984:146). Wright's response unfortunately characterizes an entire variety of scholarship which arrayed arguments (against Boswell's claims) which are presented as irrefutable but in fact are not. It is hard to ignore the tones of personal animus which hover over his text.

To the undoubted relief of the editors of *Vigiliae Christianae*, Petersen rebutted Wright two years later in a short article which elegantly exposed the logical flaws of Wright's tautology. "Since Boswell maintains that the word ['arsenokoitai'] indicates 'active male prostitutes', what exactly does one expect them to be engaged in, other than 'male homosexual activity'?" (Petersen 1986:191) Wright admitted familiarity with Kenneth Dover's *Greek Homosexuality* but failed to take into account its clarity and prodigious learning, and specifically Dover's point that the Greeks had "no nouns corresponding to the English nouns 'a homosexual' and 'a heterosexual,' since they assumed that virtually everyone responds at different

times to both homosexual and heterosexual stimuli" (D.F. Wright 1984:150, n.47; Dover 1978:1, n.1). Petersen concluded, "neither the amassing of parallel usages of 'arsenokoitai' in ancient documents nor the examination of the translations of the word into other ancient languages will remove the insurmountable obstacle that none of these agrees with the meaning of the modern noun 'homosexuals'" (1986:189). He added, "discernment is a quality often lacking in Mr. Wright's article" (Petersen 1986:191). The translators of the New Revised Standard and the New Jerusalem versions have rendered 'arsenokoitai' as 'male prostitute' or similar wording which emphasizes activity rather than identity.

A far more cogent and courteous critical response to Boswell's claims about Christian Scripture was offered by Richard B. Hays, who concluded that Boswell tended to confuse normative with descriptive judgments, and confused exegesis with hermeneutics by concluding that "the New Testament takes no demonstrable position on homosexuality" (Hays 1986:203, 211, referring to Boswell 1980:117). Hays argued at length that St. Paul in Romans 1.26 does portray "homosexual activity as a vivid and shameful sign of humanity's confusion and rebellion against God," and offered a variety of hermeneutical strategies which might better delineate how later Christian tradition construed or misconstrued St. Paul's thinking (Hays 1986:211). By 1986 Boswell's lexicographical appendix had been superseded by Robin Scroggs' widely-praised work, which moved discussion in another fruitful direction (Scroggs 1983; see also Brooten's pertinent criticisms 1985, and Furnish 1979).

Richard John Neuhaus cited Hays' essay (a model of discerning, balanced, critical thinking) in his harsh assessment of Boswell's work (Neuhaus 1994). Thereby hangs a tale which demonstrates the radical animosity which sometimes characterized criticisms of Boswell's scholarship. Neuhaus represented Hays as saying, "Boswell's interpretation, says Hays, 'has no support in the text and is a textbook case of reading into the text what one wants to find there'" (Neuhaus 1994:58, citing Hays' article). Neuhaus offered no page citation, for good reason: the alleged quotation never appears in Hays' essay. Hays *did* write that "to suggest that Paul intends to condemn homosexual acts only when they are committed by persons who are constitutionally heterosexual is to introduce a distinction entirely foreign to Paul's thought-world and then to insist that the distinction is fundamental to Paul's position. It is, in short, a textbook

case of 'eisegesis,' the fallacy of reading one's own agenda into a text" (Hays 1986:200-201).

Neuhaus' "error" is more than merely a muddled quote. He took careful, discerning thinking and (one cannot but presume) deliberately garbled it to serve his own ends. Hays' point, valid as it is, is limited in scope, and his mention of 'eisegesis' included a definition for readers of *Journal of Religious Ethics* (who conceivably might not be familiar with this technical term). Neuhaus transformed Hays' point into a blanket condemnation, intellectually (at least) bearing false witness. If historical scholarship is largely a cottage industry, Neuhaus has tried to poison the village well, that is, to undermine the good-faith conversation and mutual consideration which makes scholarship possible. Instead of trying to discern insight into the past by means of historical study, Neuhaus wishes to destroy the subject because it is inconvenient to his project of defending a traditionalist version of Roman Catholicism.

Adams, a medievalist and scholarly reviewer, questioned Boswell's functional concept of gay eroticism ("eroticism with a conscious preference" Boswell 1980:44). In the case of the friendship (literary and otherwise) between Ausonius of Bordeaux and Paulinus of Nola, Boswell admitted that "there is no evidence that the relationship between" them "was a sexual one (nor any indication that it was not)" (1980:133). They did employ language in their poetry which initially occurred in a cultural matrix in which male same-sex desire was quotidian and acceptable, and transmitted such conventions to succeeding centuries; their language "would no doubt have struck the average heterosexual Victorian—or FBI agent of the 1950s— as pretty suspicious, but what does that prove about the late fourth century?" (Adams 1981:352). Adams feared that Boswell stumbled "against anachronism" in his final step by proposing "a definition of 'gay' so broad as to be useless for social history, which must trace the linkage between attitudes and behavior" (1981:352). This is a serious and pertinent criticism, which hinges on whether or not the concept "gay" is regarded as permeable by other kinds of same-sex relationships than erotic. Is it not possible that Ausonius' and Paulinus' friendship was literary, spiritual, intellectual, theological, and physically erotic by turns only they could have described? If "gay" indicates a relationship which, once turned toward physical affection, may never be otherwise, then Adams' fear is both warranted and unanswerable, insofar as such private experience rarely (then or now) emerged into literary light.

Other reviewers criticized Boswell's fourth, fifth, and sixth major points.[2] These concerned the interaction of Christian teaching and practice, and varying levels of social tolerance (or intolerance) and "homosexuality" (a modern term describing varying combinations of behaviors) in medieval Europe, roughly 700-1400. These points were (to repeat) that (4) gay people were rarely visible during the early Middle Ages and moral theology treated homosexual behavior as comparable at worst to heterosexual fornication; (5) the revival of urban culture was accompanied by a reappearance of gay literature and visible and substantial gay minority which left a permanent mark on the culture of the age; (6) in the latter half of the twelfth century virulent hostility began to appear which coincided with the rise of intolerance towards other groups (such as Jews and heretics) and was reflected in and perpetuated by the theological, moral, and legal compilations of the later Middle Ages which influenced European society for centuries afterward.

While Protestant scholars focused their dissent on Boswell's treatments of New Testament and early patristic texts; Anglican and Roman Catholic scholars reserved most of their ire for Boswell's treatment of these medieval topics.[3] "A case undemonstrated" was the judgement of J. Robert Wright, who believed that Boswell's claims could not be sustained "in terms of the biblical/patristic/historical evidence that is available" (J.R. Wright 1984:81-82). Wright's repeated criticism is that Boswell failed to consult such indexes as *Biblia Patristica, Index Biblicus Corporis Iuris*

[2] Boswell's third claim (regarding growing hostility to gay people during the dissolution of the Roman state) received largely perfunctory notice except to note that the "rural ethos" which came to predominate during the dissolution of urban society seems doubtful (Hauerwas 1985:230), and the more general criticism that Boswell neglected the penitentials or used them inadequately (Thomas 1980:28; Sheehan 1982:445). Very little currently orthodox Christian theology is implicated in such questions.

[3] See Norman F. Cantor's insightful remarks (*Inventing the Middle Ages: the Lives, Works, and Ideas of the Great Medievalists of the Twentieth Century* (New York: William Morrow 1991):287-96), especially p. 295 "It is precisely because the burden of the past is disseminated through the living [Roman Catholic] church of today that any assertions about the Middle Ages by a Roman Catholic has [sic] doctrinal as well as historical significance. Any publication based on research and interpretation about the Middle Ages is of central value to Catholic education and spiritual counseling." John Boswell was, of course, a liberal Roman Catholic.

Canonici, and *Index Thomisticus*. In many cases his criticisms were well warranted, and revision of some of Boswell's particular readings might be helpful to advance the scholarly discussion, but his own recommended method is not beyond question. For example: "By checking out such words as *sodomia* and *peccatum contra naturam* [in *Index Thomisticus*] ... it is now possible to establish precisely what they meant for Thomas in their original contexts, the significance of their phraseology and linguistics, and how Thomas handled them in his patterns of thought ..."(J.R. Wright 1984:92). It is really possible "to establish [these words] precisely"? Boswell, in attempting to discern St. Thomas' meaning, found that he had lifted various concepts from medieval bestiaries, mediated through a popular poem (Boswell 1980:308, 328-329, 389-392). Such linguistic and conceptual information runs well outside of the bounds of the lexica to which J. Robert Wright is so devoted. In the end, Wright showed that Boswell's book is not above criticism about numerous details, but not that Boswell's basic argument is "undemonstrated."

Boswell's claims about the medieval world were also criticized by Glenn Olsen, in particular Boswell's claims about "natural law" and the effect, Olsen believed, of "bringing into his analysis the conclusions of a central tenet of Classical Protestantism, namely that because reason is incapable of forming a true concept of good according to nature alone concepts must come from revelation" (1981:120). Regardless whether there is such a thing as "Classical Protestantism" (note Olsen's capitalization), this is a perverse argument to make against Boswell, who clearly showed that "it was not until the thirteenth century that actual definitions of "nature" were formulated to exclude homosexual activity" (1980:312). Which defintion of "nature" did Olsen have in mind? Indeed, the actual definitions of "nature," and Scholastic construals (or misconstruals) of such Aristotelian concepts, were the very marrow of Boswell's Chapter 11. To accuse Boswell of importing the notion that "reason is incapable of forming a true concept of the good according to nature alone" (regardless how one judges this Scholastic argument) constitutes accusing Boswell of denying the importance of his very sources and evidence. Would anyone do that for thirty-plus pages?

Another particular criticism centered around Boswell's portrayal of Saints Anselm of Canterbury and Aelred of Rievaulx as in some sense "gay" persons. Boswell does not specifically apply that adjective to St. Anselm, who is notoriously hard to characterize on many counts. He did combine

"the monastic ideals of celibacy ... [with] extraordinary emotional relationships, first with Lanfranc [Anselm's teacher] and then with a succession of his own pupils" (Boswell 1980:218). St. Anselm desired not to apply the draft regulations of the Council of London of 1102 which designated (for the first undisputed time in England) homosexual behavior as sinful (see Boswell 1980:215). He indicated his hesitations in a letter to Archdeacon William; but as Sheehan points out, the letter was cast in broader terms, that the canons had not been properly discussed or drafted (1985:445). St. Anselm's motivations could have been more complex than indicated formally in this letter, but this interpretation "is at best a possibility ... that is weakened when the letter is put in context' (Sheehan 1985:445). Linehan found Boswell's account of St. Anselm "as much tendentious as misinformed" (1981:73).

Regarding St. Aelred, Boswell is probably on stronger ground. St. Aelred's extravagant amorous vocabulary, drawn from the *Song of Songs* and Cicero, does lend credence to the view that "his erotic attraction to men was a dominant force in his life" (Boswell 1980:222). Boswell's conclusion that "there can be little question that Aelred was gay" is both probable and problematic. He was deeply committed to monastic celibacy (obviously he could have been both gay and celibate; "a dominant force" does not logically entail a compulsive one). Did Boswell read a twentieth-century concept into his twelfth-century sources? While Russell was ready to dub St. Aelred "the gay abbot of Rievaulx," McGuire was not so quick (Russell 1982). Upon entering the monastery, he "transferred his search for male contact into the spiritual sphere" (McGuire 1994a:142). But McGuire did not "consider it essential to reach any final conclusion on Aelred's homosexuality" (McGuire 1994b:224). This suggests that if Boswell were ever justified in describing his subjects as "gay," St. Aelred was bound to be a compelling case (but see Christensen 1981:854). Was Boswell ever so justified? (see below)

Adams, on the other hand, felt that Boswell was on weak ground in claiming St. Aelred "as on of the key instances of twelfth-century monastic sympathy for gay love" (1981:353). Boswell erred, Adams believed, in appearing to trivialize St. Augustine's "thoroughgoing opposition to homosexuality in any form... as a classic instance of the rural reaction that destroyed the sophisticated tolerance of Greco-Roman urbanity" (1981:353). St. Augustine's many misprisions were braided together in his attack on what he believed to have been the sin of the Sodomites in

Confessions 3.8; but Adams correctly points out that St. Augustine's portrait of his own youth (*Confessions* Book 2) had more than a few homosexual suggestions. This matters because, Adams believed, in failing to give an adequate account of St. Augustine's hostility towards homosexuality, Boswell slighted an "admittedly decisive" view for much of the next millenium of Western thought. When centuries later St. Aelred loaded his reflections on *his own* youth (which intimated more than little homosexual involvement) with echoes and verbatim borrowings from *Confessions* 2.1-2, the Cistercian's "candor is all the more remarkable" if he consciously departed from Augustine's specific verbal formulae (Adams 1981:353-354).

Respectful readers found many other minor criticisms, most with little long-term import. Sheehan, J. Robert Wright, Christensen, and Adams all discussed various short-comings of Boswell's texts. Prominent among these were: (1) Boswell's inattention to medieval penitentials (books of directions, questions, lists of sins, and model prayers for confessors) (Christiansen 1981:854; Sheehan 1985:445; Thomas 1981, 29); (2) Boswell's somewhat facile use of the distinction betwen rural and urban types of civilization (Christiansen 1981:853); (3) Boswell's lack of exploration of friendship between members of the same sex that is without erotic overtones (Sheehan 1985:443).

More generally, Sheehan noted one Boswell's foibles, "namely the tendency to overstate, and hence to weaken, the effectiveness of an observation" (Sheehan 1985:443). If a fair-minded reader might have been granted one wish for Boswell's books, it might have been that Boswell curb this tendency. He repeatedly stressed that *CSTH* was a "provisional" study of the social topography of medieval Europe (1980:39); his early treatment of the historical phenomenon of the rise of intolerance "must be regarded as provisional" (1980:333). These two characteristics (tentativeness, and a tendency to overstate) when taken together can inject a coy tone into Boswell's texts—for example, his treatment (above) of St. Anselm as "gay" without actually saying so. It is as though the author were winking to the reader, "I know ... but of course it's all provisional." It may have been this tone which partially accounted for the unreasoning fury of some of Boswell's harshest critics, both of *CSTH* and the later books.

Occasionally Boswell also freighted a translation of an obscure and hard-to-interpret text too heavily. His treatment of the statements of the Councils of Châlons (813) and London (1102) perhaps stressed certain Latin

statements too heavily; several of Augustine's statements make good evidence without such burdens (Sheehan noted one instance 1985:444).

Do these objections, taken together, constitute a disconfirmation of Boswell's core argument? This reader judges that the many objections to *CSTH* do not ultimately disconfirm its central claim that religious belief— Christian or other— has *not* been the *cause* of intolerance of gay people. Factors other than Christian belief *per se* came into play, such as particular construals of Roman law, Aristotelian natural law, the decay of cities, etc. But the six subsidiary claims around which Boswell organizes his sweeping narrative (from the Roman world and the early church to the rise of intolerance in the fourteenth century) need considerable further nuance. Boswell's interpretation of the New Testament and several patristic authors either has been superseded by better hermeneutical and exegetical procedures, or needs re-casting. Boswell's claims regarding the later medieval period need reconsideration in the light of the work of social historians of the liturgy such as Miri Rubin (1991), John Bossy (1983), and Mervyn James (1983): social exclusion of "deviants" (heretics, Jews, homosexuals) may have been intimately related to liturgies of inclusion (such as Corpus Christi processions).

These faults, freely conceded, still not do serve *in toto* to disconfirm Boswell's core thesis about the rise of intolerance in middle and later western medieval Europe. No one except Neuhaus (who offers cant rather than argument) proposes that Boswell was actually *wrong*. Even the ill-tempered David F. Wright restricted his comments largely to his proper purview, the early church. "Unproven" is a verdict heard somewhat more often, and even then counter arguments proposed by Olsen and J. Robert Wright are hardly clinching. It is truly unfortunate that Boswell will not have the opportunity to revise and recast all his books. A more tightly focused *CSTH*, taking into account subsequent work in allied fields (such as New Testament and second-century hermeneutics) might well prove an overwhelming case regarding the rise of medieval intolerance.

The rise of virulent Christian intolerance towards heretics, Jews, homosexuals, millenial movements, and others is an uncomfortable story for nearly all readers, and especially for all Christian readers (Boswell 1992). The sixtenth-century Reformers (whether Protestant, Anglican, or Roman Catholic) inherited such intolerance and in many instances continued it; sixteenth-century martyrologies are predicated upon it. "Tracing the course of intolerance reveals much about the landscape it traverses, and for this

reason alone it deserves to be studied. Perhaps it is not too much to hope that its examination will yield ... insights of use to those who might wish to reduce or eradicate the suffering associated with it" (Boswell 1980:38).

(3)

The Kindness of Strangers (*KOS*) is certainly the runt of the litter of Boswell's three books if measured by the amount of critical attention it has received; ironically it is also his longest. He had encountered arguments by Clement of Alexandria and Justin Martyr (while working on *CSTH*) that Christian men should not visit brothels or engage the services of prostitutes "because in so doing they might unwittingly commit incest with a child they had abandoned" (Boswell 1988:3). Was abandonment really so common that this was possible?

KOS is Boswell's response to his initial bewilderment. Fundamentally it claims that abandonment was not only common, but quotidian, regardless of its moral status. Parents abandoned a child not to kill it, but to ensure its survival. They abandoned a child because of poverty, shame, and the desire to restrict the number of heirs, or in hope that someone of higher status and greater means might raise it, or because it was the wrong gender, or had ominous auspices, or because the parents were callous. Foster children usually became slaves, sexual servants, monastic oblates, or "alumni" (heirs not related by blood, marriage, or property)(Boswell 1988:118; 428-429). Many children died, although their mortality rate was not always much higher than children who were not abandoned. Nevertheless some children did prosper, so that the Latin term "aliena misericordia" acquires a double edge: both the "strange kindness" or "foreign mercy" by which the small but steady trickle of truly kind adoptive parents took on the care of foundlings, and the more ironic and menacing "kindness" which many children received at the hands of slave masters, pimps, and brigands.

Like *CSTH*, *KOS* proceeds from Boswell's questions about an important topic in social history which is extremely difficult to document (in *CSTH* intolerance; in *KOS* child abandonment), to an intricate discussion of terms and related concepts. Boswell then documented legal, literary, and other evidence from the Roman Republic and Empire (with Greek antecedents), turned to the rise of Christianity, moved on to late antique, early medieval, and later periods. He cited an impressive array of legal,

literary, theological, liturgical, and epigraphical evidence in many languages and across a wide variety of cultures.

Boswell's chief difficulty lay with his sources. They are sparse, with no statistics until the eighteenth century (and even then only suspect ones), and a large evidentiary gap in the high Middle Ages. Boswell was quick to note corrupt texts, and was well aware of the hazards of interpreting laws, statutes, and prohibitions. He also garnered evidence from personal narratives, hagiographies, poetry, and fiction. The last category is notoriously hard to handle as historical evidence, and Boswell was fully aware of the "quicksand" problem (i.e., quicksand is "a familiar part of the fictional landscape" but "its role in fiction is not a realistic reflection of its importance" in actual lives; 1989:6-7). For certain aspects of the ancient Roman world, and the period called the High Middle Ages, Boswell had to turn to literary witnesses. While Thomas suspected "rhetorical sleight of hand" (1989:913), Knox thought that Boswell defended his method "with skill and telling effect" (1989:12). Stone found that "the general convergence of the different types of evidence is persuasive" (1989:31).

Boswell's fundamental concept of child abandonment had necessarily to be broad (so as to fit a wide variety of evidence) and modern (so as to accomodate historical inquiry). He bought such usefulness, however, at the price of some imprecision (McCarter 1989:727; Ellsberg 1989:475). Abandonment "refers to the voluntary relinquishing of control over children by their natal parents or guardians" (Boswell 1988:24). The Latin *expositio* (or *exponere*) meant basically "to make public" or "to display" more than "to expose" to danger, death, etc. Children were usually "exposed" in public places (baths, plazas, dumps, church doors) so that they would be found (Boswell 1988:25). The English word "abandonment" does not quite do justice to the social complexity of *expositio* (though Boswell was surely correct to judge that "to expose," in the sense of to endanger, is worse).

Critical reception of *KOS* was infinitely milder and kinder than that directed at *CSTH*. Most critical reservations have been noted above or are about particular matters. McCarter questions Boswell's supposition "that the Renaissance Italian foundling home became the pattern for the rest of Europe" (1989:728). Medieval oblation (giving a child to a monastery to be raised as a religious) may not have automatically entailed abandonment. As Herlihy pointed out (1989:15) a child formally oblated to a monastery frequently came with a bequest, was expected to pray for his or her rela-

tives, and since (male) abbots were frequently chosen from the ranks of the oblates of patronal families, an oblate might wind up administering large portions of a monastic endowment in concert with the interests of his family. This may be child transfer, but it is not the "kindness of [otherwise disinterested] strangers" as implied in much of Boswell's book (see also Boswell 1984).

A few readers were troubled by the tone of the book. Ellsberg found that Boswell's "motif throughout ... is optimistic, if not exactly euphoric" (1989:474), and McLaughlin found Boswell's interpretation of the evidence "encompassing and positive" (1989:16) despite the records of so many desperate parents and children. Steiner found that "there attaches to this book a sheen of prurience—a clear-sightedness that verges on that of the voyeur." He suspected this sheen sprang from Boswell's "tonality, from coloration, from acrobatics of surface logic" (Steiner 1989:105). Perhaps these qualms also sprang from the vivid success of Boswell's historical vision: he absorbed so much of desperation of these parents that he could communicate it clearly to contemporary readers in a "low-keyed, scholarly, factual account" (Stone 1989:34)—an uncomfortable historical vision if ever there were one.

Only Michael Gorman dissented from Boswell's larger narrative: Boswell was "unable to acknowledge or account for the clear and consistent condemnations of [abandonment] in *early* Christian literature" (1990:33; but see Stone's disagreement 1989:32; and Knox's 1989:10). Granted that Gorman wrote a very short review, he offered no evidence to back up this assertion. Boswell did cover what evidence there is from the first three Christian centuries (not much, to be sure) and makes a defensible case that early Christian denunciations of any sexual act not intentionally procreative may unintentionally have exacerbated the problem of unwanted, surplus children. Surviving writings tend to reflect the concerns of the literate Christians, who were often from upper classes. Christian moralists who apparently condemned child abandonment were in fact condemning non-procreative sex. No one sought to excommunicate those who abandoned children. Certain Christian writers expressed dismay, but this does not amount to "clear and consistent condemnation," (of abandonment *per se*) as Gorman alleged. The evidence is just too thin to sustain his viewpoint.

The lack of statistical and demographic evidence about abandoned and foundling children until the eighteenth century meant that Boswell (like

every other scholar) had to resort to inference and approximation about the ubiquity of child abandonment and its social stratification and significance through time. His doubts sprinkled qualifications across the pages. But as Keith Thomas noted, "possibly" becomes "it seems likely;" "might have" gives way to "must have" in too many places (Thomas 1989:913-914; see also McLaughlin 1989:16; Ellsberg 1989:475). At times Boswell exhibited his previously-encountered foible of weakening a good argument by claiming too much for his evidence: did early Christians really transfer feelings for child abandonment to Jesus, his semi-foundling birth and fosterage by Joseph? While St. Paul obviously used "adoption" language (Rom. 8:15, 23; 9:4; Galatians 4:5; the Pauline Ephesians 1:5), did Christians really believe that God "had given up a child to them"? (Boswell 1988:154-155) Was Constantine really "the last ruler of an empire that was sufficient stable and organized to support an elaborate bureaucracy"? (1988:73) What about the bureaucracy which St. Augustine encountered eighty years later? One occasionally encounters a truly infelicitous (and avoidable) phrase, such as the former "pagan Romans [who] were now Roman Catholics" (1988:177) not to mention those who became Eastern Orthodox or Monophysites.

While *KOS* makes controversial claims, it is not hard to see why it was regarded as so much less threatening. Obviously no one today recommends child abandonment, although the care of children in poverty is a contemporary topic. The behavior of desperate Christian slaves, freed persons, and other lower- (or upper-)class people in Christian antiquity (whatever approval or disapproval they received from their bishops) is moot for virtually all Christians today. Those who (like Gorman) oppose abortion today do not base their cases even in part on the social behavior of ancient and medieval Christians.

Boswell presented in *KOS* a disturbing narrative about social complexities in which ancient and medieval Christians thought and acted in ways which contemporary Christians (and others) find objectionable (see Crossley 1990:402). He received little critical challenge when he used the same methods and exhibited the same foibles for which he was excoriated when he wrote about homosexuals.

(4)

In 1982 someone wrote to Boswell about a ceremony published in Jacques Goar's *Euchologion* (1730) which represented a "brother-making" ceremony for a sort of monastic union between two individuals of the same sex (Boswell 1994a:ix). Boswell found other manuscripts in European libraries including eight in the Vatican Library. From the beginning (following the tumultuous reception accorded to *CSTH*) he was wary. While working at the Vatican, "when people walked by me, I would hide what I was looking at" (Boswell 1994b:35). His work turned into *Same-Sex Unions* (*SSU*), undoubtedly his most controversial book.

Denunciations of *SSU* have been so damning (and its praise sometimes so faint) that it is helpful to try to isolate Boswell's major claims, most clearly stated in his epilogue (1994a:280-281). (1) Heterosexual matrimony in premodern Europe (which Boswell takes as roughly from late antiquity to the fifteenth century) tended to be undertaken primarily for dynastic or business reasons, and romantic love in it tended to arise after the (legal or erotic, or both) coupling. (2) Many ordinary people focused their passionate emotions into same-sex relationships: friendships, "brotherhood," and partnerships of one kind or another (where much more is known about men than about women). (3) Christianity exacerbated doubts about the emotional significance of matrimony, privileged voluntary celibacy (even within marriage), and directed sexual desire implicitly or explicitly towards procreation. (4) Christianity transformed same-sex relationships, especially passionate friendships among paired saints and holy virgins, into "official relationships of union, performed in churches and blessed by priests" (1994a:280). (5) Although the nature and purposes of heterosexual marriage have varied widely in the past, the liturgy for this union functioned roughly like a "gay marriage ceremony." A "permanent romantic commitment between two people [was] witnessed and recognized by the community" (1994a:281). Whether this union was sexual is hard to know (just as, historically, it is hard to know whether childless heterosexual unions between persons of child-bearing age involved sex; Boswell 1994a:189).

SSU is based on two sets of source documents which the author labors to set into context: narratives describing powerful personal bonds between men with no familial ties to each other, and liturgical documents (Cadden 1996:694). These sets of documents take up nearly one quarter

of the book, several in both original languages and English. Like *CSTH* and *KOS*, Boswell began with an extended discussion of terms and concepts, not only to propose and clarify his own usage, but to introduce many readers to the very different expectations of heterosexual unions common in distant centuries. Boswell turned next to heterosexual matrimony in the ancient world, then to same-sex unions in the Greco-Roman world, traced the effects on them of the rise of Christianity, outlined the development of nuptial offices and compared same-sex and heterosexual union ceremonies, and attended (finally) to medieval Europe.

Like *KOS*, Boswell in *SSU* faced extraordinary evidentiary difficulties. Manuscripts were difficult to interpret and sometimes involved very rare and little-studied languages. The evidentiary trail in Latin Europe is extremely slim. The two core sets of texts originated in a Christian period remote from contemporary North America. While the personal narratives give reasonably good clues as to date and provenance, the liturgical texts are much harder to place (Boswell 1994a:179). The Greek texts in particular used an old and very subtle language which was good at veiling subsidiary meanings. Some reviewers' confidence in their own assertions and arguments looks quite misplaced when confronted by these texts. Given the disorder of his sources, it is little wonder that Boswell's book is sometimes hard to understand.

Cadden noted how carefully Boswell tried to relate his sets of sources to each other (in order to show that "these two types of evidence are about the same personal and social relations") and thus to document "the existence and Christian sanction of the affective, personal union of a male couple, formally recognized as a social institutional and substantially parallel to heterosexual marriage throughout the premodern period, particularly in the East" (1996:694). In "neutral language" so as to avoid the charge of modern "constructivist" notions of sexuality (see Part 5, below), Boswell ironically found that same-sex unions were "more similar to modern marriage than were premodern heterosexual marriages—more free, more equal, and likely to be grounded in mutual affection and meaningful choice" (Cadden 1996:695, 694).

Cadden judged, however, that Boswell's argument is unsuccesful, on three counts. Despite his professed neutral language, in fact "same-sex union" does come to function as a transparent euphemism for "gay marriage" (1996:695). Boswell did not entirely resolve the critique voiced by Halperin (1990:81-83) that modern notions of "homosexuals" impede ac-

curate readings of the premodern social and cultural dynamics in play in the sources. Boswell's reluctance to join the theoretical issue (e.g. 1990:270-271) unfortunately foreclosed what might have been an immensely fruitful conversation. Finally, Boswell's substitution of the phrase "same-sex union" for "brother" (or "brother-making") obscured the connections of *adelphoi* and *adelphopoiesis* with adoption, blood-brotherhood, and "spiritual" (other than erotic) marriage. Although marriage's "symbolic value was raided by traffickers in allegory" (Boswell 1994a:115, quoting Elliott 1993:39), Boswell inadvertently may have sold *adelphopoiesis* short. Cadden concluded that Boswell's book is a significant, positive legacy for "the fruitful explorations of contexts and interpretations, leaving behind the Scylla of homophobic denial" (1996:695-696).

SSU did garner other positive reviews, although they are often bland (Warner 1994; Holsinger 1994; Bennison 1995). The negative critics often wrote in a manner that can only be called poisonous. Spending an evening reading these reviewers is a dismaying experience: one might have hoped for more from educated people. Some (Bray 1994; Kennedy and Kemp 1995; Viscuso 1994; Wilken 1994; David F. Wright 1994; Young 1994) offer little more than mudslinging. They basically refuse to take *any* of Boswell's claims seriously in their (implicit or explicit) high anxiety about same-sex unions today. David F. Wright (1994:59), for example, peevishly complains that Boswell confused him (*SSU*:219, n.4) with J. Robert Wright. David F. should be happy to take erroneous credit, since J. Robert's arguments (see above) are far more lucid and cogent. Wilken dismisses *SSU* as "historical learning yoked to a cause" (1994:26). Which cause does Wilken's learning serve? From the Kenan Professor at the University of Virginia, this is disappointing. Kennedy and Kemp believe that, since Boswell's languages and sources are obscure, "few scholars are likely to examine his evidence," and that because of errors "we wondered if we could find even one important reference that was accurate" (1995:45). Scholars such as Cadden (1996) have indeed examined Boswell's evidence carefully (undoubtedly to the amazement of Kennedy's and Kemp's simple minds), and this writer (as a professional librarian) can attest that, despite the unfortunate number of typos, Boswell's bibliographical and material references do check out.

More serious reviewers, in the main negative, offer substantial objections. Despite Shaw's hostility, he offers significant criticisms and noted

a major paleographical difficulty (1994:36; see also Wilken 1994:24; Young 1994:48). A major manuscript source, *Grottaferata Gamma Beta Two* (11th cent.) displays a line drawn between "another prayer for same-sex union" and an ecclesiastical canon governing marriage attributed to Patriarch Methodius. Was this line placed by someone other than the copyist to distinguish two differing offices? Did the "brother-making" office end with declarative prayer declaring the two one, directly analogous (and worded substantially like) a heterosexual union? Boswell unfortunately consigned this major evidentiary discussion to a long, defensive footnote. It does constitute a major difficulty for his interpretive argument, which may only ever be resolved by re-examination by several recognized paleographical experts. Wilken's conclusion that "someone, while reading the manuscript, realized that prayers from different rites had been mistakenly copied together" is as paleographically ill-founded and hasty as Gomes' bland acceptance of Boswell's argument (Wilken 1994:24; see also Shaw, above; Gomes 1994:91).

Another evidentiary difficulty is in the provenance and origins of the manuscripts. Many of them reflect distant or proximate origins in Greek-speaking Italy (e.g., *Grottaferata*) or Byzantium—very important Christian centers, but also places with distinct regional variations and identities (perhaps even warily co-existing with Muslims; compare Boswell 1977). Although Reynolds (1995:49) superficially asserts that "these ceremonies were peculiar to the liturgical traditions of Greece and the Balkans" (and implicitly unimportant for Westerners), medieval Greece and Greek-speaking Italy are important related cultures which need further exploration, not Reynold's dismissal.

No Latin manuscripts survive, though Boswell asserted (1994a:184) that the ceremony was performed in Ireland (wher neither Greek nor Slavonic would have obtained) on the strength of Gerald of Wales' detailed denunciation (Boswell 1994a:259-260 with Latin and English text). Gerald's Latin is notoriously difficult. Boswell set it in a context in which it is at least highly probable that Gerald was describing a same-sex or brother-making ceremony similar to Eastern ones. Elsewhere Boswell noted that mutilation of Latin manuscripts may have occured (264) although this is only a moderately strong argument from silence. Montaigne may have witnessed such a ceremony, with little comprehension, in Rome in 1578 (Boswell 1994a:264-265). In the end, Boswell's evidentiary trail for the Latin West is so slim as to be virtually uninterpretable.

Do all these criticisms (and other innumerable, disputed minor details) constitute a disconfirmation of Boswell's core argument? Possibly yes, but in important ways it is too soon to tell. There is little denying that *SSU* is Boswell's most troubled book; it shows numerous signs of intellectual and editorial haste, undoubtedly in part because the author was growing more seriously ill as the book neared its premature completion. Woods (1995) points out numerous difficulties and errors in Boswell's handling of Slavonic sources, even at the level of transliteration.[4] The later chapters rely on quite a different evidentiary base than the earlier, and give an episodic feel to the whole text (Linehan 1995:6)

The difficulties of interpreting liturgical texts, however, come to haunt both Boswell and his more serious critics. They all might have done better to read Paul Bradshaw's caveats. In puzzling through the evidentiary conflicts and contradictions of the early church orders, Bradshaw has formulated "ten principles for interpreting early Christian liturgical evidence" (1992:56-79). Several of these are extremely helpful for consideration of later liturgical evidence as well, to wit (in Bradshaw's numbering): (1) "what is most common is not necessarily most ancient, and what is least common is not necessarily least ancient"; (5) "when a variety of explanations is advanced for the origins of a liturgical custom, its true source has almost certainly been forgotten"; (7) "liturgical manuscripts are more prone to emendation than literary manuscripts"; (8) "liturgical texts can go on being copied long after they have ceased to be used"; (9) "only particularly significant, novel, or controverted practices will tend to be mentioned, and others will probably be passed over in silence; but the first time something is mentioned is not necessarily the first time it was practised."

In Boswell's case, Bradshaw's principles (7) and (8) go a long way in leavening debate: it is entirely possible (*contra* the cranky Wilken) that someone else drew a line in a crucial place in the manuscript called *Grottaferrata Gamma Beta two*, because it was "obvious" to a later scribe that the prayers would not belong together (an instance of "living literature"); on the other hand, it is possible that even by the time of this manuscript the liturgy was beginning to drop from usage. Bradshaw's principles

[4] A secular Slavicist in Princeton, who does not share Woods' traditionalist Roman Catholic anxieties, confirmed these difficulties, without sharing Woods' overly broad conclusions.

(1) and (9) suggest (*contra* Reynolds) that it is entirely possible that brother-making or same-sex liturgical ceremonies did occur in the Latin West, but seemed unusual only to the dyspeptic Gerald of Wales. In regard to Bradshaw's fifth principle, the variety of warrants and rubrics supplied in the manuscripts, and the variety of explanations offered by Montaigne, Goar, and even modern scholars is a sure sign that the true sources of these brother-making ceremonies have been obscured, and at minimum Boswell made a concerted effort to excavate the wreckage.

Whether Boswell's central arguments are confirmed or not, another scholar (or several of them, given Boswell's polymath abilities) needs to reconsider his texts, bearing in mind caveats like those Bradshaw suggested for similar work in another era. These texts are too important to be left to rusticate and might yet reveal much more about "brother-making" and other social matters.

The critical response accorded to *CSTH* and *SSU* is startlingly similar, even though the former is a far more successful book. On the one hand, Boswell continued to exhibit his besetting foible of asserting too much and thereby weakening a good argument. Is it in fact the case that "the principal and most idiosyncratic personal response of devout [early] Christians was celibacy?" (Boswell 1994a:110) Even in the context of "matters sexual," is that not an overly bold claim? What about divorce? What about other personal matters, such as fellowship with the saints, care of the poor, and avoidance of idolatry?

On the other hand, Boswell's critics, especially the hostile ones, demand an impossible degree of proof and a sometimes pedantic extreme of scholarly tidiness. A good example of both Boswell's foibles and hostile over-response is offered by Robin Darling Young, a professor at the Catholic University of America. She charges Boswell with "the invention of precedent" for a contemporary cause (gay marriage). She clinches her case with a regrettable example of Boswell's overstatement, by pointing out that Severus of Antioch (d. 538) would be aghast, "patrician Hellenophone that he was, to discover that he had composed his Homily of St. Sergius in Syriac" (1994:44). To be sure, Boswell wrote, "Severus, bishop of Antioch from 512-18, though a Monophysite, composed a beautiful homily in Syriac in honor of the two saints [Serge and Bacchus]" (1994a:155). Boswell made a mistake; the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (s.v.) notes that "many of [Severus'] works ... are mainly preserved in Syriac translations" (including this one). But does this really

constitute "insousiance about historical accuracy ... unacceptable in an undergraduate paper"? (Young 1994:44) May Prof. Young rap all our knuckles with her ruler. She never proposes any plausible alternative readings of the main points of Boswell's sources.

The reader encounters too often Boswell's other besetting foible, that of weighting a translation from a difficult source with too much freight. Boswell faulted Gerald of Wales' previous translator, Thomas Wright in 1881, with nineteenth-century English prudery, but Boswell's own translation renders its own questionable construals. Shaw makes a number of points about Boswell's likely miscontruals of the Roman legal *Digest* (Shaw 1994:37, 40).

When all is said and done, *SSU* needs substantial revision, not so much to retract Boswell's basic argument as to refine, strengthen, and qualify it, to rein in his less fortunate phrases, and to raise more clearly the evidentiary difficulties posed both by his own readings and the alternative readings suggested by serious critics. Boswell's own unacknowledged assumptions about liturgical texts need as much correction as his critics', especially those who embrace a traditionalist Roman Catholic agenda.

The furore raised by all three of Boswell's books raises provocative questions about historical methodology and the role of ecclesiastical history in theological and religious studies. In conclusion this text will turn to these questions.

(5)

Despite the numerous problems which have been identified by responsible critics of Boswell's last book (*Same-Sex Unions in Premodern Europe*), Boswell's major writings taken together offer an impressive and informed attempt to understand the soft tissues of the organic entity of human beings and human societies. "The flesh that provided size and shape, the skin and hair that determined appearance, the viscera that governed metabolism and growth, the brain that directed movement and invested life with meaning—all these are leached from the sediments" which, like paleontologists, historians usually study (Boswell 1988:5). The primary documents of history are frequently laws, letters, tax lists, ideas, and durable institutions. Boswell tried to find traces of evanescent human comunities, "'flesh and blood' in its most literal sense: children." A historian uses words, obviously, and if those words are hard to choose regard-

ing wills, testaments and tax accounts, how much harder are they to choose regarding love, procreation, and holiness!

In this extended "coda" to this bibliographical review essay, I wish to reflect on two questions forcefully raised by Boswell's writings: first, how might a historian justify the use of certain language in the course of historical study and writing; and second, what kind of impact might that language have on other interested communities of inquiry, especially the churches?

To rephrase the first question, to what extent do a historian's very words create his or her subject of study? Boswell himself spoke on this question, and I will attempt to represent his answer first, and then comment upon it from my own perspective.

First, two examples. When Boswell was studying the phenomena of re-distributing children among the nurturing households of the ancient and medieval worlds, he came again and again upon the phrase *aliena misericordia*. After a while, this phrase became almost a technical legal phrase, yet never lost its connections with everyday usage. How was he to translate it? A literal verbal translation would be something like "an alien mercy" or "a strange pity" terms which suggest either the uncanny or the extra-terrestrial to contemporary North Americans. A more syntactical translation would yield a paraphrastic: "a compassion which originates from a person previously unrelated by blood or law," not exactly an easy phrase to read. Boswell hit upon "the kindness of strangers" because although it is verbally and syntactically less immediate to the Latin, the phrase gets at the heart of the concept, which is "the motivation of persons who rescued abandoned children" (1988:xvi).

On the other hand, Boswell's translation of *adelphopoiesis* as "same-sex union" has become much more controversial. In the Greco-Roman world the terms "brother" and "sister" were used as terms of endearment for heterosexual spouses. The usage of words which suggested "sibling relationship or affective, intimate family ties (Latin *affinitas*)—rather than the terms of control related to power and hierarchy—constituted a hallmark of ancient lovers of whatever gender" (Boswell 1994a:69). So what to make of *adelphopoiesis*? Does "brother-making" admit sexual overtones and emotional endearment, or is it more typical of military or blood-brotherhood fraternal ties? The terms "my old man," "Momma," and "Daddy" have wandered far from their origins in North American culture where the prohibition of parent-child incest is strong, to say the least. Does the

English term "same-sex union" carry exclusively sexual overtones now, even though paraphrastically it could cover a variety of relationships? This raises the familiar disagreement between partisans of verbal fidelity versus partisans of conceptual fidelity. Boswell's choice of "same-sex union" for *adelphopoiesis* is certainly no more linguistically daring than is "the kindness of strangers" for "*aliena misericordia*"—although ultimately Boswell's choice may be judged to obscure more aspects of *adelphopoiesis* than it illumines (see Cadden 1996:695).

In several lesser-known conceptual essays, Boswell (1982 1983, 1990a, 1990b) refined his thinking on such fundamental linguistic and conceptual fidelity to his sources. In 1983 he attempted to articulate his views in terms of the philosophical question about universals. He asked, "do categories exist because humans recognize real distinctions in the world around them, or are categories arbitrary conventions, simply names for things which have categorical force because humans agree to them in certain ways"? (1983:91) "Realists" tend towards the position that "universal" (or at any rate widespread) categories of sexual orientation recognize a real distinction in the world. "Nominalists" tend to the view that the category "sexual preference" (note the crucial difference) is a conventional category which names an agreed understanding of erotic desire as expressed in language; "whatever reality [such categories] have is the consequence of the power they exert in those societies and the socialization processes which make them seem real to persons influenced by them" (Boswell 1983:91).

It is not to hard to sniff the various scents of Foucault and linguistic analysis in Boswell's formulation. In historical study, the dead hand of anachronism can grasp partisans of any view. Despite such scents Boswell was never a theory-driven historian.

The 1980s witnessed the so-called constructivist/essentialist debate. This debate tried to ask whether sexual orientation is a "construct" of "human society and therefore specific to any given social situation" (1990a:135); or whether it is "essential", "that humans are differentiated at an individual level in terms of erotic attraction ... in all cultures" (1990a:137), regardless of social and historical location. Like many academic debates the distinction is by turns both genuine and artificial. To a limited extent "essentialism" is a rhetorical foil created by self-described constructivists; "no one deliberately involved in it identifies himself as an 'essentialist'"(1990a:133; see also 1990b:68). Boswell disavowed the no-

tion that "some other force—genes, psychological influences, etc.—creates 'sexuality,' which is essentially independent of culture" (1990a:137). But he conceded that on a practical level, the supposition that "there have been in all Western societies 'gay people' and 'non-gay people' ... was in fact, the working hypothesis" of CSTH (1990a:137). Boswell never really addressed the objections, however, of scholars like David Halperin, who asks whether modern questions about "homosexuals" actually hamper reading and understanding the social and cultural dynamics of premodern cultures (Halperin 81-83).

So did Boswell inadvertently create a narrative by the definition and use of an essential term such as "homosexual" or "gay"? Did he reasonably speak of "gay" and "lesbian" persons, acts, and sexual orientations in premodern Europe? If I may put a few words in his mouth, I think that Boswell tended to see sexual behaviors as examples of "family resemblance." Both heterosexual or homosexual behavior in premodern Europe is quite possibly equally distant from what we call hetero- or homosexual behavior now. But these behaviors are never simply one thing; they are combinations of many kinds of overt and covert acts, motivations, and desires. As such, these combinations of behavior can exhibit a family resemblance to each other without being identical. By comparison, geographically one can compare twelfth-century England and twentieth-century England, but one cannot compare ninth-century Neuestria and modern Belgium even though they occupy some of the same space. The first family resemblance is reasonable; the second one is spurious because it is too distant to be plausible. But neither family resemblance claims identity. Medievals seem not to have formed any notion of "sexual orientation," although of course they could distinguish among desires and acts. Boswell concluded that most such combinations of sexual behaviors and desire displayed something like "family resemblances." They can be identified through historical study and do not require either formal definitions of "essentialist" or "realist" sexual orientation or constructivst, nominalist concepts of sexual preference.

As Boswell clarified his thinking about these issues, he later defined "gay persons" more simply "as those whose erotic interest is predominantly directed toward their own gender (i.e., regardless of how conscious they are of this as a distinguishing characteristic)" (1989:35). He continued to disavow rigorous "essentialism" however ("I was and remain agnostic about the origins and etiology of human sexuality"; 1989:36).

It is most ironic that Boswell's functional concept of gay eroticism (informally essentialist, if at all) is probably an assumption shared (though not articulated) by his harshest and least respectful critics. Strictly speaking, an essentialist-like understanding of human sexuality based on a "realist" philosophical position (that sexual orientation is a real human characteristic) does not necessitate intolerance towards gays and lesbians. But such an understanding has often accompanied intolerance, at least in the European and North American past.

On the other hand, a broadly constructionist, nominalist (or nominalist-like) understanding of human sexuality might have been more congenial to Boswell's study. Such a view might describe Boswell's historical subjects as those persons who participated in the social construction of "culturally dependent phenomena" (e.g., sexual preferences) unique in their times and possibly without analogy in ours (Boswell 1989:35; see 1983:95; see also Halperin 1990:83). Had Boswell taken this view, he could have avoided Robin Darling Young's charge of the invention of precedents (Young 1994:44). So for example, fourth-century Greek urban Christianity would tend to construct sexual identities which could not be re-constructed or regarded as precedents for a culture so different as our own. Such nominalist-like, constructivist-like distance comes at a very high price, however: the charge that this demonstrates that the past really does not matter, so that studying it is peripheral to our own moral conduct. For better or worse, Boswell's core convictions and scholarly confidence prevented him from taking this easier way out (Boswell 1994b:36) He laconically quoted St. Thomas Aquinas in his epigraph to CSTH: "Because of the diverse conditions of humans, it happens that some acts are virtuous to some people, as appropriate and suitable to them, while the same acts are immoral for others, as inappropriate to them" (1980:vii).

As a working hypothesis, a historian has to employ concepts which would probably be incomprehensible to persons who lived in the time period under consideration, but are reasonably explanatory to contemporary readers. Imperial Romans knew quite well the effect of monetary inflation (as their coinage was literally debased), but would never have understood the modern concept. If Boswell can be faulted here, it is that (as in the case of Anselm of Canterbury) he may have claimed too much for his working explanatory concepts (see Linehan 1995:7). The semantic, political, and empirical arguments which Boswell advanced in 1990 (1990a:141-162) defend his usage of his terms as well as a working his-

torian needs to do. It is the nature of historical inquiry that other historians will make other choices.

I alluded above to two questions: how might a historian justify the use of certain language; and what kind of impact might that language have on other interested communities of inquiry, such as the churches? Language is at the heart of both questions. Amos Niven Wilder, the late theologian of language wrote, "There is no world for us until we have named and languaged and storied what it is," and that is true for historians and ecclesiastics alike (1983:361). Language is essential to the churches' cultural and theological transmission in each generation. This transmission is not mechanical, like water in a pipe, but is the result of the hard work of parents, teachers, preachers, bishops, and scholars—guided in and by the Holy Spirit, Christians claim. Like broader society, the church can be regarded as an imaginative culture with a distinctive story on the one hand, and on the other as a society with patterns of power, legitimacy, and authorized discourse very similar to those encountered elsewhere. For an ecclesiastical historian, the question is not just to write a cultural history of this ecclesiastical society (an account of its distinctive concepts, discourse, and ideology), nor only a social history of this ecclesiastical culture (an account of its patterns of hegemony, legitimacy, and exchange).

I assert that the ecclesiastical historian's question is how to write a consciously incomplete account of stability and change, enduring cultural assumptions and changing patterns of discourse. The deep structures of society may well be the cultural structures of social imagination: the kind of world which is named, languaged, and storied.

Ernst Gombrich, an art historian, wrote in *Art and Illusion* that artists and their publics share visual "levels of expectation" shaped by elements he calls "schemata" or "formulae" or "models." "All representations," he wrote, "are grounded on schemata which the artist learns to use" (Gombrich 1960:313). The parallel here with any kind of writing, including historical writing, is suggestive. The "schemata" of social imagination are the cultural perceptions and customs which a writer uses and in turn shapes; such schemata both constrain and aid cultural construction of new "levels of expectation." Artists change visual schemata by noting the discrepancy between a model and reality as they perceive it. Images are not luxuries, but important aids for "the serious business of perceiving the world... It is precisely where the rainbow ends that art begins" (Gombrich 1982:170). Many such visual or intellectual schemata build up levels of

learned expectation of cultural legitimacy which provide social stability and enhance a safe arena for cultural challenge and change.

Broadly speaking, St. Thomas Aquinas called this pattern a habitus, a way in which God continually blesses God's church (ST I.52.1,2; I-II.112.4). Scholars, like artists, use this repertory of many social and ecclesiastical habitus which both constrain and aid their contribution to the further development of cultural expectations. As the repertory of habitus changes, what is central might move to the periphery, and what is peripheral might become central.

What, practically, does all this reflection upon language and cultural discourse have to do with ecclesiastical history and the present-day life of the churches? Two particular metaphors have been invoked to answer this question, and in Gombrich's language they are influential kinds of "levels of expectation" cobbled together from many kinds of "schemata" or models or stereotypes. They can be summarized as (1) defense of the deposit of apostolic faith; (2) the organic development of the idea of Christianity.

Robin Darling Young fairly represents the first of these metaphors. This metaphor suggests that the role of ecclesiastical history at the intersection of the discourse of ecclesiastical historical inquiry with the reflective language of faith in the churches is to assist with the defense of the deposit of apostolic faith. She charges that Boswell "uses [his documents] in a way that would be quite familiar to church historians of the era of "confessional" church history, famously represented by the Magdeburg Centuries among the Reformers and Caesar Baronius among the Catholics... Like them, Professor Boswell has set out to create a usable past" (1994:44).

What is "usable" in the past? Prof. Young never states what she actually thinks is the role of ecclesiastical history in the life of the churches, so her following summation will have to stand in for her unprofessed view. "For Christians," she writes, "antiquity means the founding centuries of the Church, when apostolic teaching was preserved and elaborated and a body of thought assembled" (1994:44).

Note her emphasis (typical for a traditionalist Roman Catholic) on the preservation of thought—i.e., the Christian past is fundamentally intellectual history aimed at the identification of the deposit of apostolic faith and prayer and its preservation through time. Traditional Anglican and Protestant ecclesiastical historians have undertaken a small variation on this, and attempted instead to identify tendencies of thinking, praying, and preaching which anticipate or express doctrinal concerns associated with key

Protestant doctrines, such as justification by faith or the sovereignty of God. Without any doubt eccleisastical history was taught this way in theological schools for many generations. Whatever such "usability" might omit, it certainly offers clear directions for what ought to be interesting to ecclesiastical historians, and what ought not. Usable discourse from ecclesiastical history is what enables theologians and bishops to establish clear criteria for orthodoxy, heterodoxy, or heresy.

This crisp concept of a "usable" past is analogous to the Whig view of history. This view of history holds that history is a marvelous development of various institutions and trends which produce, in turn, us. Politicians love Whig histories of their own countries and political viewpoints. A usable past, in this traditional view, is a past which features the preoccupations of powerful mainstream institutions in the present, such as the courts, the military, the church, the chief executive, or the academy. History sets clear precedents for school, state, and church, such as the canon of classical authors, the rise of accountable monarchs and representative democracies, the deposit of apostolic faith in Scripture, creed, and doctrine, whether Catholic or Calvinist (to suggest only two examples). In such a view, what is important about the past is usable, and the past is important precisely because part of it is deemed usable.

The second influential metaphor which seeks to describe the intersection of the discourse of ecclesiastical historical inquiry and the reflection language of faith in the churches is the metaphor of the organic development of the idea of Christianity. This metaphor can occur in the "hard" Hegelian form which speaks about the dialectic of historical reason in and through and beyond Christianity, and it essentially reduces history to providing examples of innovation and response which consort nicely with the needs of Hegel's philosophy. No historian today really represents this "hard" version. But the "soft" version which emphasizes organic development and uses words such as growth, decay, and rebirth still reverberates through historical discourse, and can be found in the language of Hegel's great theological rival, F.D.E. Schleiermacher. This kind of language has always been attractive to liberal Catholics and Protestants because it facilitates a shift from the language of doctrinal belief in the deposit of apostolic faith, to the language of trust in the apostolic essence of Christianity. While none of Boswell's critics truly speaks from this metaphorical position either, the language of a hazily-defined trust is still attractive to some. Ecclesiastical history in the service of Christian trust

allows plenty of room for moral argument and evaluation without the necessity of doctrinal judgements.

I do not pretend for a moment that Stanley Hauerwas either overtly or covertly builds upon Hegel or Schleiermacher. His understanding of the rationality of Christian narrative breathes a very different spirit than Schleiermacher's famous assertion that "religion begins and ends with history" (as quoted by Pelikan 1989:230). Despite their differences, Schleiermacher and Hauerwas both use the language of trust. Hauerwas' understanding of moral argument founded upon narrative intersects at some point with the discourse of historical inquiry. He noted, for example, that CSTH "takes the form of a moral argument that depends for its cogency on the historical analysis... Implicit in Boswell's method is the assumption that not only do we need better historical studies to understand the nature of Christian (and non-Christian) ethics, but history is intrinsic to the very nature of moral argument and understanding" (1985:229). In *Koinonia Journal* he straightforwardly asked "does 'history' produce knowledge we ought to trust as Christians"? (1994:108) If Hauerwas means, do historians produce a kind of knowledge which Christians should trust for their eternal salvation? then many historians would undoubtedly recoil from such a notion. How could any scholar presume so much?

Hauerwas implies a broad syllogism about Christian uses of history implicit in the continuing echoes of the metaphor of the organic development of the Christian idea of essence. This syllogism might be stated thus: (1) Christianity is based on an arguably historical person who became associated with internally complex and variable combinations of doctrine, prayer, and action,—combinations which also originated in a historical period; (2) most if not all of these combinations of doctrine, prayer and action specify that these complex patterns of adherence to original (apostolic) teaching, fellowship (koinonia), the breaking of bread, and prayers link the Christian community to Jesus who had come as Savior and would come again as Judge; (3) therefore, Christian faithfulness now is at minimum no less than adherence to complex patterns of doctrines and practices which can be shown to have originated in a specified period. In Momigliano's words, "in the Church conformity with origins is evidence of truth" (Momigliano 1990:136).

There are certain problems with all this. First, the historical period of origins needs to be specified. Was it Jesus' own preaching? thirty years after Jesus' death? a century? five hundred years? The apostolic message

itself gives little or no criteria for specifying such a period. Second, the contents of the complex patterns of teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers must be specified in far greater detail, and the patterns taken together give no firm criteria for adjudicating major and minor divergences. Finally, if obvious historical changes originating outside the community of faith are granted to play any role in the community's growing narrative, that role must be specified. For example, how are the churches to incorporate a change such as the Roman destruction of Jerusalem (70 C.E.) into the community's narrative—does this change mean anything to the community, or does the community and its narrative continue on as though unaffected?

The power of the discourse of Christian trust expressed through some kind of formal or informal Christian communal narrative allows the Christian community to do several things. Such discourse allows the community to recognize external changes, to specify particular complex patterns of faithfulness, and to specify more closely which portion of the distant Christian past has more authoritative weight than other portions of the communal narrative. Theologians which rely on a strong sense of narrative, whether St. Augustine, Luther, Schleiermacher, or Stanley Hauerwas have developed theological criteria for making all these decisions, but their criteria are always to some extent vulnerable to fresh insights about particular historical eras. For example, Luther badly misunderstood some aspects of medieval Scholastic theology; Schleiermacher badly misunderstood the Eastern Orthodox tradition and Churches. When newer and fuller historical inquiry yields pertinent insights which correct or overturn such interpretations altogether, then the discourse of historical inquiry directly impinges upon Christian theological narratives. To echo Hauerwas' question, where in history is Christian trust to be found? Ecclesiastical history studied under the metaphor of trust has particular trouble answering Hauerwas' question, and if the answer is clear but narrow, the theologian risks the charge of informal sectarianism—a charge which Hauerwas has had to refute.

Ecclesiastical history, unlike sectarian or confessionalist history, both represents and refashions complex traditions which are both historical sources and historical processes. Ecclesiastical traditions both constrain and aid historical discourse, quite like the "levels of expectations" which constrain and aid Gombrich's artists. Ecclesiastical history is predicated on Christian variability and internal disagreement. The Vincentian canon

("what has been believed everywhere, always, and by all"), regardless whether it be a theological ideal, has never been a reality. Historians (together with other scholars) are involved in this vast specifying and sorting out.

Boswell objected both to the kind of history which seeks crisp orthodox usability as well as the kind of history which saddles the organic development of thought and doctrine with the weight of theological trust. "Until the middle of this century premodern European history consisted principally of the doctrines of the Christian church and of the political and military activities of kings and aristocrats. That this added up to a severely restricted, if not grossly distorted, view of European society had become apparent by the 1940s, when this narrow text was vigorously emended by the annalistes, the French group of social historians who strove to retrieve from the margins of history the scribbled lives of the poor, the ordinary, the unaristocratic, the nonstrategic, the apolitical" (Boswell 1992:94). Boswell situated himself in the post-annaliste attempt to study the "ideas, lives, and feelings of those not merely unimportant or overlooked in their own day but actively oppressed, silenced, or hidden from view" (1992:94). In Ernst Gombrich's language, the difference between the schemata or model and perceived reality had become too pronounced for some historians to ignore.

This kind of ecclesiastical history directs its attentions not so much towards the identification and preservation of the intellectual, prayerful deposit of apostolic faith, as towards the interaction of Christians with each other in evolving patterns of faithfulness, unfaithfulness, vision, blindness, hospitality, and intolerance. Whether this Christian past is "usable" or "trustworthy" is much harder to demonstrate according to the traditional doctrinal and intellectual criteria. It includes orthodox and heretical Christian doctrines, prayers, and teachings, as well as the social interactions which both formed them and were formed by them as glimpsed in a variety of media (e.g., poetry, art, personal accounts, church wardens' books, in addition to doctrinal and political texts). It lends itself to a variety of interpretations, and not infrequently casts revered Christian leaders in somewhat less than saintly light.

Boswell was more ambiguous about what kind of trust Christians might place in the discourse of historical inquiry regarding matters of faith. He recognized that post-annaliste historical study is not necessarily "debunking" inquiry, but can easily tend to treat Christianity as a doddering old

aunt: "humor her and let her say whatever she wants to but don't take her seriously" (Boswell 1982:10). Boswell refused to do this: he could see the inconsistency that at Nicea or Chalcedon "it is funny that truth is decided by majority vote, but that doesn't mean that it's not true" (1982:10). He is endebted here to a rather traditional Catholic understanding of the cooperation of nature and grace. By nature, Boswell comprehended a Christian past was not just the preserve of bishops, kings, preachers, saints, and councils, but included homosexuals, Jews, Muslims, women, foundling children, and some sort of ceremonies to celebrate some sort of partnership among people of the same sex. By grace, it was a Christian past nonetheless, capable of cooperation with God's grace for the completion and fulfillment of nature.

So do Boswell's books provide historical knowledge which Christians can trust? Do Boswell's books name, language, and story a world which contemporary Christians might find intellegibly similar and helpful to their contemporary perplexities? CSTH and SSU certainly serve to undermine the traditionalist notion (abroad in many ecclesiastical traditions) that the ecumenical Church's practical teaching on homosexuality has always been unambiguous. If anyone supposes that Christian practice has always been unambiguously to anathematize homosexual persons (howevermuch as the descriptor "homosexual person" may be valid), CSTH would suggest otherwise; intolerance has grown perceptibly to supplant earlier tolerance. Boswell's other book (KOS) suggests a middle term, that acceptable moral practice in the church has changed over time; *expositio* (child abandonment), foundlings hospitals, and modern child welfare organizations all have served a broadly shifting moral consensus.

Yet anyone who recommends to contemporary churches that they ought to practice greater tolerance or acceptance of homosexuals, or ought to bless same-sex unions on the basis of Boswell's historical writings may be pressing Boswell's studies into positions of antepenultimate or penultimate Christian trust, positions better left to preaching, liturgy, and formal ecclesiastical discussion. The "moral argument" of all his books is much more indirect, and works through suggesting complexity, historical change, and the intrinsic temporal dimension of abstract terms in moral theology. This writer believes that there are indeed excellent arguments to tolerate, accept, and ordain gay and lesbian persons, and to bless their unions, but on bases which are only indirectly derived from Boswell's complex and subtle historical texts.

In Boswell's spirit, I wish to suggest another metaphor for the study of the ecclesiastical, cultural, social past. This metaphor is entirely different from ecclesiastical history as the metaphoric guardian of the fortress of orthodoxy, preserving intact an inviolable deposit of faith. This metaphor is also entirely different from ecclesiastical history as the story of the unfolding, growth, or development of Christian doctrine and practice through history as a source of trust, equating the sense of history with understanding of Christian faith as self-awareness (Pelikan 1989:231). With Boswell, as a Christian historian I do believe that the content of Christian history matters, that it is not just a nominalist-like cultural production of hegemony and memory.

I suggest the metaphor of ecclesiastical history as the archaeology of flesh and blood, as Shakespeare tells us, the stuff that dreams are made on. This "flesh and blood" is the soft tissues of the past, the entrails of motivation, imagination, memory, despair, and hope in every human being, in Jesus, the Christ, and through him in the eucharistic community of memory. I intend by "archaeology" a much more modest metaphor than Michel Foucault's memorable images of archaeology, genealogy, and ethics (Davidson 1986). Archaeology is a procedure and discourse which alters its own basis of information even as it discovers it. No archaeological dig can happen twice; the original data-base is destroyed in order to be interpreted. Metaphorically, the study of ecclesiastical history (the study of the assembly of all those who have perceived themselves as called by God) employs scholarly interpretations and discourse which both constrain and aid the assembly's remembering. Simultaneously the assembly's discourse and levels of expectation both constrain and aid the scholar's discourse.

In the community of flesh and blood, bread and wine, this exchange of discourse, and discourse of exchange, point to a faith and a Word which is graciously beyond hegemonic social control and hazardous individual interpretation. The Christian archaeologist is a living partner in a conversation with the dead, their bones and parchments and guts and brains. Such history hews close to its sources, whether written or material. It is a process of learning to ask the sources the right questions and learning to listen to whatever answers they might give. David Tracy has called this theological process "mutually critical correlations" (Tracy 1975:49-52, 79-81; 1981:371-376). The ecclesiastical historian's conversation between the living and the dead requires a disciplined imagination which is intrinsically

analogical, a blessed rage for the disorder of the source materials (Tracy 1981:404-421).

The concept of heresy can provide a quick, sketchy example. Heresy studied in the kind ecclesiastical history which seeks to identify and preserve the intellectual content of the deposit of apostolic faith is formal heresy. It is the willful and persistent adherence to an error in matters of defined doctrine of the Catholic faith on the part of a baptized person. Heresy studied in the kind of ecclesiastical history which seeks to understand the organic development of Christian faith is essentially an arrested development (Pelikan 1989:78-79, 269-272). This view is far more charitable, and suggests a sort of material heresy, the holding of heretical doctrines through no fault of one's own, as is the case with most people brought up in "heretical" surroundings; such a person never consciously accepted certain formally Catholic doctrines, and so cannot reject or doubt them. Of course, this definition is circular, and heresy as a case of arrested development tends to suppose the existence of a body of apostolic, authorized doctrines somewhere else.

By contrast, I suggest that the heresy suggested by the ecclesiastical history as a sort of archaeology of flesh and blood is essentially a transgression against the Christian community. Such heresy is a "choosing" (*haeresis*) because it privileges certain authorized voices to such an extent that it materially silences or exiles discordant voices and subversive perceptions. The insistence that only authorized perceptions and defined doctrines provide a true standard of orthodoxy ignores the social transmission of countless practices which enliven or impede evolving understandings of the holy Presence in, with, and under the church.

The individual ecclesiastical historian is always an archaeologist in a trench, with limited time and point of view close to the ground. The fragmentary narrative discourse which such Christian historians can provide frankly admit their own lacuna. I suggest that such fragmentary history can provide knowledge which Christians can trust for historical knowledge, one grain of sand at a time. Whether the discourse of ecclesiastical historians can even begin to chart the course of the subterranean streams of apostolic, faithful witness is a judgement which I believe can only be rendered from the standpoint of the Kingdom of God at the conclusion of all histories.

Let Boswell's texts continue to be challenged, re-thought, reformulated, and revised by responsible, insightful, and fair-minded readers. That is the

process of history, not understood as organic development or guarding the fortress of apostolic orthodoxy, but a history of the stuff that dreams are made on, the archaeology of flesh and blood.

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The God of Unnatural Acts: An Orthodox Interpretation

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> It is very odd that these three crimes, witchcraft, heresy and that against nature, of which the first might easily be proved not to exist; the second to be susceptible of an infinite number of distinctions, interpretations and limitations; the third to be often obscure and uncertain—it is very odd, I say, that these three crimes should amongst us be punished with fire. Montesquieu, *De l'espit des lois*, xxi. 6 (Moore 1987:1)

> The other breaks in the nature of things have turned out, one by one, to be optical illusions, or fences put there by ourselves for our own purposes: why not this one too? (Douglas 1975:210)

FERRIBY INTRODUCES A NEW METAPHOR FOR THE STUDY OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL, cultural, and social past. Rather than understanding ecclesiastical history as the guardian of orthodoxy or as the story of the development of Christian doctrine and practice through history, he suggests the metaphor of the archaeology of flesh and blood. Such a history, defined as the study of the assembly of all those who have perceived themselves as called by God, is by definition *inclusive*. Ferriby uses heresy as an example to contrast his archaeology of flesh and blood with previous understandings of ecclesiastical history. The guardians of orthodoxy who are seeking to pre-

serve the deposit of faith see heretics as those baptized persons who do not believe what the church has determined to be the "right doctrines." Those ecclesiastical historians looking at the organic development of the faith soften this somewhat by including a clause for "those who didn't know any better." So in other words, those who believed the "wrong doctrines" but never had the opportunity to hear and reject the "right doctrines" are not quite as bad as those who knew and rejected the "right doctrines." In an archaeology of faith and blood, Ferriby suggests that heresy becomes a "transgression against the Christian community." In this understanding, heresy "privileges certain authorized voices to such an extent that it materially silences or exiles discordant voices and subversive perceptions." As Ferriby notes, "the insistence that only authorized perceptions and defined doctrines provide a true standard of orthodoxy ignores the social transmission of countless practices which enliven or impede evolving understandings of the holy presence in, with and under the church."

Up to this point, if you have any disagreements with this essay, you disagree with Ferriby or at least my reading of him. Ferriby cannot, however, be held responsible in any way for what follows. Ferriby's essay raises an interesting question: Who in Christendom today continues to insist on maintaining authorized perceptions and previously defined doctrines as the true standard of orthodoxy while ignoring or silencing the voices from the margins? That is, who might qualify as a heretic, according to this construal of heresy? I find this especially appealing because, according to my understanding of this definition, I am not a heretic. Moreover, I like the sound of the metaphor. An archaeology of FLESH and BLOOD is what I understand the church to be made of: human beings, female and male, old and young, gay and straight, strong and weak who confess the Lordship of Christ. But before I proceed to name the heretics in our midst, as the New Testament respondent I would like to set forth an exploratory interpretation along Ferribian lines. That is, I would like to redefine orthodoxy as the inverse of the aforementioned understanding of heresy. The orthodox person would be one who, rather than privileging certain authorized voices and perspectives, instead lifts up and gives voice to the discordant and subversive. My exploratory interpretation will focus on that notorious passage in Paul which biblical interpreters understand to be his position regarding the sin against nature. But before I offer an *orthodox* interpretation, I want to raise a question which will linger unanswered

behind my exploration, viz., how exactly does Paul understand *nature* in such a way that he can confidently assume that it is self-evident that nature teaches that long hair is degrading to a man (1 Cor 11:14-15)?

I would like to use Romans 1:26, where Paul refers to certain acts as being contrary to nature (παρὰ φύσιν), to briefly sketch the contours of what an *orthodox* interpretation might look like. At the outset, we should keep in mind that God is one who cannot act heretically. Remember, we know of who God is by how God acts. I offer a discordant, subversive understanding of God, not as one whose will can be found in some natural order but rather as One who acts against nature and is the very basis of accepting unnatural acts or acts contrary to nature as having the potential to reflect who God is. To paraphrase Paul, let us agree to let God be orthodox and every person a heretic.

If the God attested to by Jesus Christ and witnessed to in the scriptures is not first and foremost One who acts contrary to nature, then most of those in Christendom today have no part in the Kingdom of God. I find the biblical foundation for such an assertion very clearly in Paul's letter to the Romans. In Romans 1:26 Paul states that women exchanged natural relations for those which were παρὰ φύσιν or as commonly translated "contrary to nature" or "against nature" or "unnatural." In the next verse men follow suit and do the same. Now, one could say that Paul is painting a caricature of Gentile behavior where these unnatural acts are a consequence of God abandoning those who worship images of birds and reptiles. In this view Paul paints such a picture in order to set a rhetorical trap for the Jews in the first few verses of chapter two. One could then conclude that it is questionable to base right doctrine on a rhetorical ploy. Or one could say that Paul's opposition to what he calls unnatural is merely a cultural bias like his injunctions for women to remain silent in the church (1 Cor 14) or his comments on slavery (1 Cor 7) and as such really does not truly describe unnatural behavior but merely uncultural behavior and should therefore be discarded. Or one could say (like many commentators throughout the church's history have said) that Paul is expressing a truth revealed in creation and that such behavior, being contrary to the natural order, is against the will of God. There are many other angles one could take to salvage this passage or to dismiss it. However, these interpretations, as far as this exploratory attempt at an orthodox interpretation is concerned, all remain within the purview of "authorized perceptions." That is, none of them dispute the assumption that what is natural reflects

the will of God. But what if God acted contrary to nature? What if *Paul said* that God acted contrary to nature? Could God's unnatural acting set a precedent for human unnatural acts? If Paul had claimed that God acted contrary to nature then at the very least one would have to admit the possibility that God's plans exceed the natural. And lucky for us that Paul does state that God has acted contrary to nature (παρὰ φύσιν). In Romans 11:23-24 Paul states that God has grafted the branch of a wild olive tree (the Gentiles) into a cultivated olive tree (Israel). The salvation of all non-Jews is dependent upon God acting contrary to nature. Perhaps this passage can be brought to the front and center and Romans 1 can be read in its light.

Remember, however, that this is just a sketch, an exploration into how one might read against "authorized perceptions." In a recent piece in the *New York Times*, Gustav Niebuhr cites several current events which "share a common theme: religious authorities trying to address fundamental questions of what violates basic boundaries—or what, to be blunt, may not please God" (Niebuhr 1997:5). He describes how in 1861, "the Presbyterians, unable to decide whether slavery violated divine law, split into Northern and Southern churches" (Niebuhr 1997:5). Niebuhr notes that in answering these fundamental questions "religious authorities may wind up in the vanguard of change or at its rear" (Niebuhr 1997:5). I am afraid that the church and most of its seminaries are guilty of the latter. Any attempts to explicate the biblical understanding of homosexuality would be wise to bear in mind the words of Jesus in the gospel of Mark chapter 7, which I paraphrase: there is nothing outside of us which by going into us can defile us; it is what comes from within, out of our hearts, which defiles us. Although I indicated that I might name some contemporary heretics, I am afraid that this would make me guilty because, as my understanding of heresy implies, those who search for heretics are guilty of heresy.

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Work on Symbols
A Response to Gavin Ferriby

IVICA NOVAKOVIC

FERRIBY'S EXTENDED "CODA" TO THE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REVIEW ESSAY addresses the question of a historian's usage of language and its possible impact on the identity of the communities. In the cases when these communities are churches, Ferriby suggests that a historian should place himself or herself in the midst of their struggle to be true to their calling. An "ecclesiastical historian" should be engaged in the creation of the new "level of expectation" of what the church should be in today's world. Following Ernst Gombrich, Ferriby calls those "cultural perceptions and customs which a writer uses and in turns shapes"—and which "both constrain and aid cultural construction of a new 'level of expectation'"—the "'schemata' of social imagination" (Ferriby 1996: 149). He then argues that Boswell in fact does not place himself undividedly on the level of the production of the new level of expectation, but rather in the very "difference between the schemata or model and perceived reality." From this perspective, Bowell is able "to study the 'ideas, lives, and feelings of those not merely unimportant or overlooked in their own day but actively oppressed, silenced, or hidden from view'" (Ferriby 1996: 154). In the last part of the paper, Ferriby suggests, in Boswell's spirit, an alternative metaphor for the ecclesiastical historian and the present-day life of the church (in contrast to the still dominating "language of doctrinal belief in the deposit of

apostolic faith" and "the language of trust in the apostolic essence of Christianity"): "archeology of flesh and blood"(Ferriby 1996: 151). Since "the content of Christian history matters" (Ferriby 1996: 151), he gives the primacy to the "community of flesh and blood, bread and wine" where the "exchange of discourse, and discourse of exchange, point to a faith and a Word which is graciously beyond hegemonic social control and hazardous individual interpretation." The ecclesiastical historian here becomes the "christian archeologist" who is a "living partner in a conversation with the dead, their bones and parchments and guts and brains" and learns to "ask the sources the right questions and... to listen to whatever answer they might give" (Ferriby 1996: 151-52).

This is an interesting proposal not only for an ecclesiastical historian but for a theologian as well. I see Ferriby's introduction of the language of "schemata" or symbols into the work of an ecclesiastical historian and the claim that this language invokes an ethical "ought"—for the "new level of expectation" demands certain ways of behavior—as a significant contribution. He is also right in showing the limitation of symbol creativity, and emphasizing a need for a realistic approach to the church's identity in today's world. This limitation, as I will try to show, can also be immanently developed through an analysis of the role of symbols in community building.

In my response I will not discuss the particular content of "schemata" that Ferriby proposes, although I very much share his concern for the "social transmission of countless practices which enliven or impede evolving understanding of the holy Presence in, with, and under the church" (Ferriby 1996: 153). I will rather try to elaborate further his suggestions about their epistemic and ethical status. I will go back to the Neo-Kantian tradition (to which, I would argue, Ernst Gombrich also belongs)[1] for it seems to me that its contribution in this area has still some advantages over other alternatives. In this context, I would like to emphasize (follow-

[1] Popper's epistemology, on which Gombrich most openly bases his theory of perception, represents a transformation of Kantian apriorism. Poppper himself claims that Kant's transcendental method is " a method which is, correctly applied, not only completely *unobjectionable* but also *unavoidable*" (Popper 1979a: 57). He himself applies it in the same book to criticize "strict positivism," but also to correct Kant's own, as he saw it (not very convincingly), "anthropological apriorism" (Popper 1979a: 42-68; 90-99). In *Objective Knowledge* (1979b: 24) Popper again argues that Kant was fully right to claim that our intel-

ing Ferriby) the historian's and theologian's role as a historical-critical symbol-interpreter within the church.[2]

Many modern epistemologies have their starting point somewhere in Kant's reconstruction of the conditions of the possibility of epistemological work. Schematism, symbolism and numerous metaphoric approaches are no exceptions. Therefore, to understand what kind of problem initiated the introduction of schematism in epistemology, I suggest that we first look on some of the main elements of Kant's doctrine of schematism. After that I will take into the discussion Ernst Cassirer's work *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*. Cassirer reformulated Kant's doctrine and expanded it into all realms of human knowledge. It is here that we can see what are the creative possibilities of schematism, but also its main limitation. In order to understand its character, I will also compare it with Heidegger's alternative, for he tried to develop an own existential ontology on his interpretation of Kantian schematism.

Kant introduced the doctrine of schematism in order to find a way to connect the two completely separate capacities of human mind: sensibility and understanding. Sensibility supplies us with the manifoldness of representations and understanding proscribes the laws to nature. These two can be connected only by something which in itself unites the character of sensibility and understanding. This third power Kant calls "schema". A schema makes categories of understanding "capable of rep-

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lect imposes its laws upon nature, he only "did not notice how often our intellect fails in the attempt: the regularities we try to impose are *psychologically a priori*, but there is not the slightest reason to assume that they are *a priori valid*, as Kant thought." Popper then concludes his transformation of Kantian apriorism in this way: "The need to try to impose such regularities upon our environment is, clearly, inborn, and based on drives, or instincts. There is the general need for a world to conforms to our expectations..." (*ibid.*) In continuity with this Popperian transformation, but in a more strongly Kantian way, Gombrich himself develops his own argument in this vain: "We could not function if we were not attuned to certain regularities. This tuning, moreover, could never have come about by learning; on the contrary, we could never have gathered any experience of the world if we lacked that sense of order which allows us to categorize our surroundings according to degrees of regularity and its obverse" (Gombrich 1984: 113). What Gombrich argues in this connection is that this "sense of order," as a basic expectation, not only controls the event in the perception, but also finds through this the entrance into human action.

[2] For the term itself see Dalferth (1997: 167).

resentation only (as) a determination of time" (Kant 1933: 185, A145/ B184). This means that categories of understanding must be schematized by temporal determinations appropriate to each of them, for it is only in this way that they can find their application to sensibility. Sensibility already (*a priori*) stands in the horizon of time. In this way, Kant schematizes all categories (quantity, quality, relation, modality , etc.) The category of relation, for example, appears as a temporal relation of that which is filling up time: duration in time, succession in time, and simultaneity. Without schematization, there is no possibility of applying categories of understanding to sensibility. This shows that the doctrine of schematism plays a very important role in Kant's epistemology. This role, however, should not be overestimated. We will come back to this question.

Ernst Cassirer was a neo-Kantian who modified the Kantian program in two important respects. First, he claimed that although we need some *a priori* categories to organize experience, they are not the same at all times: our categories develop historically. Second, he went beyond Kant's central focus on scientific knowledge to a consideration of all symbolizing activities, which are the distinguishing features of human beings (the human being is an *animal symbolicum*)[3] and which all are, along with science, of equal status. Thus, in comparison with the Kantian model, the model offered in Cassirer's philosophy appears to acquire a more dynamic character and extended role: "the critique of reason becomes the critique of culture" (Cassirer 1953: 80).

"Symbolic form" is the central concept in Cassirer's critique of culture. He defines it as "each energy of human spirit through which an intelligible content and meaning is joined with and internally adopted to a concrete sensible sign" (Cassirer 1961: 175) This conception is directly opposed to the view that a symbol passively copies an existing reality. The sensory impression assumes a form for us only when we mold it through a symbolic reality. In Cassirer's words: "Myth and art, language and science, are in this sense configurations towards being: they are not simple copies of an existing reality but present the main directions of the spiritual movement, of the ideal process by which reality is constituted for us as one and many—as a diversity of forms which are ultimately held together

[3] "Reason is a very inadequate term with which to comprehend the forms of man's cultural life in all their richness and variety. But all these forms are symbolic forms. Hence, instead of defining man as an *animal rationale*, we should define him as an *animal symbolicum*" (Carisser 1944: 26).

by a unity of meaning." (Cassirer 1953: 107) The philosophy of symbolic forms thus becomes a theory of knowledge in which each type of knowing is tied to an area of cultural activity and symbolic use.

Cassirer's interpretation of symbolic forms opened many new possibilities. He was able to show that reason should not be understood as a monolithic unity, but rather as being comprised of a multiplicity of the ways of knowing, something we expect to learn from Foucault but not from a neo-Kantian. He has also shown that one of the significant dimensions of human subjectivity is the indirectness of the relation between a human being and his or her environment: reality is that what can be experienced in the frame of a theory. Epistemologically, this indirectness is revealed in acts of symbolizing. This means that the use of signs is not only an expressive act of the intellect, but also a mode of organizing experience. Thus, it shapes the knowledge of a subject.

Now, although Cassirer grounds his thinking in the symbol rather than in the faculties of mind, his philosophy retains a crucial component of Kant's formalism: the function of reason is to project tasks, not to identify substances. In contrast to Heidegger, he therefore does not overestimate the importance of transcendental schemata. Heidegger has, by focusing exclusively on schemata, leveled out the Kantian distinction between phenomenon and noumenon (Heidegger 1990: 69-77). This dualism, which is of crucial significance for the Kantian project, is retained in Cassirer. Kant's problem is not the problem of "Being" and "Time", but the problem of "Being" and "Ought," of "experience" and "idea" (Cassirer 1931: 16). The locus of Kant's project is not simply our being here in the world—although we have to comprehend the nature of our finitude—but the unreachable goal and purpose of our being here. Cassirer follows this project by claiming that we create that purpose by being able to think beyond our "existence" and think the "intelligible substrate" of humanity (Cassirer 1931: 18).

This shows an important advantage of Cassirer's project in contrast to those of Heidegger and his followers. Cassirer argues, following Kant, that the ethical dimension transcends schematism, for our notion of freedom is an insight and not a knowledge: "the schematism is also the *terminus a quo*, but not the *terminus ad quem*." (Heidegger 1990: 173) The question is, however, how adequate is Cassirer's explanation of culture in terms of the symbolic-creative functions of human spirit. There is a fundamental limitation in the symbolic approach not only toward the ethical realm, but also with regard to its reality basis. The capacity for symbolic formation

and its implementation implies primarily a capacity of individuals and the behavior of individuals, which is also suggested by the whole epistemological framework. The cultural world, however, is one that is shared by individuals and experienced as given prior to individual behavior, even though individuals are constantly contributing to changing its appearance. There is thus a priority of cultural organizations which cannot be explained in terms of human symbolizing activity. Cultures always take shape within the socially organized reality—institutions. Now, it seems to me that Ferriby's interpretation of Boswell as a historian who is located in the very "difference between schemata and perceived reality" (149) points to this dimension. The church, as one institution among others, with its historians and theologians should look more closely at the actual conditions of our societies before engaging in attempts at theologically formulating and developing further the realistic religious symbol-system which would be adequate to the present-day pluralistic world.[4] This moves an ecclesiastical historian even beyond the church's internal identity markers and its margins[5] to the other participants in the pluralistic world among which the church has to struggle for its true identity. It is in this context that Ferriby's proposal for an ecclesiastic historian should become a challenge to all those who dare to develop a new "level of expectations" —to use again Gombrich's nice phrase—of what the church should be in the today's world.

[4] See Welker (1995a, esp. 78-103) and also Welker (1995b).

[5] I am tempted to interpret Ferriby's reflections on the role of heresies in the church's, and also the historian's quest for identity, along the lines suggested by Schelling: "That which is true and divine should not be provoked through external force, and whenever the Church starts to persecute heretics, it has already lost its true idea. The Church should with the great heart, being aware of its heavenly origin, never put itself into a position to have enemies, to recognize enemies" (Schelling 1860: 464). Firstly, this suggestion does not exclude the possibility that there might be things which really do not give space for the Gospel to be recognized as a good news, and which may actually be self-destructive. Ferriby's definition of heresy as "a transgression against the Christian community," (Ferriby: 20) is certainly very important, but not enough (For a broader recent discussion about this question, undertaken from a Lutheran perspective, see Wirsching, 1990, esp. 141-79). Secondly, Schelling does not try to solve the conflict between the individual and the community within the

logic of a political system (in contrast to Hegel, for whom all freedom ultimately becomes a known necessity) but rather in the community of ideas, which, in contrast to political system, recognizes heretics, because it is not totalitarian, but free. It seems to me that Ferriby's own "community of flesh and blood" (in spite of an uncomfortable organological semantic; on the reappearance of the old belief in homogenity in modern theological discussion about pluralism see Graf, 1995: 123-4) invites a Schellingian interpretation, for it points "to a faith and a Word which is graciously beyond hegemonic social control and hazardous individual interpretation" (Ferriby: 151).

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Questions in an On-going Discussion

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GAVIN FERRIBY HAS PRESENTED AN EXPLORATION OF THE NATURE AND PURposes of "ecclesiastical" history and its relationship to the life of the church. He uses the corpus of John Boswell's writings, including his scholarly methods and the critical responses they received, to make concrete his larger questions concerning ecclesiastical history, the task of the historian, and the relationship of both to the church. Ultimately, Ferriby's paper does *not* concern the question whether it is appropriate for historians to make use of the term "homosexual" in writing about any other than the modern period. Thus it is also not appropriate to focus this response on the questions whether Boswell's conclusions or concepts are substantiated adequately in his work and whether they can be "used" as supporting evidence for one or another position in the contemporary debate concerning the ordination of homosexuals within the church. There is a place for that inquiry, but it seems to me that it is outside the larger argument Ferriby has placed before us.

What do I see as the larger questions Ferriby raises? I would phrase them as follows.

First, what is "usable" of the past? Or, better, In what way is the past "usable"?

Second, what is "ecclesiastical" history, as distinct from "secular" or "confessional" history? One possible direction for discussion would be to explore the adequacy and helpfulness of Ferriby's analysis of three possible metaphors for defining "ecclesiastical" history—as being in "the service of preserving the deposit of the faith," in "the service of Christian trust," and as "the archaeology of flesh and blood" (Ferriby 1996:150, 152, 156).

Third, what are the consequences of holding a particular understanding of "ecclesiastical" history for the individual historian's— and the churches' — understanding of the relationship of history to the life of the church? In what sense is the past made "usable" within each of these three perspectives? In what sense is the past "trustworthy" within each of these three perspectives? Is history's "usability" or "trustworthiness" the best way to evaluate the relationship of history to the life of the church? Ferriby answers these questions by suggesting that history's relationship to the life of the church is one of "conversation partner" (1996:156).

Fourth, to what extent should ecclesiastical historians attempt to justify their use of certain language? Has not the writing of history always forced historians, in conversation with their sources, to offer translations of remote terms or practices into terminology that is at least, as Ferriby puts it, "reasonably explanatory" to contemporary readers? Is this not an issue which becomes fore-grounded in a historian's work—and in critical responses to that work—when the matter under study is positioned at some distance from the center of orthodoxy? Is this not as true also for Biblical scholars, historians, Christian social ethicists, theologians, and preachers? Earlier controversies concerning the role of women in early Christian communities and the translation of Biblical passages concerning women in the church offer parallels to contemporary controversies concerning the study of human sexual practices and norms.

Fifth, and of particular interest to me, what might a consideration of the historian's role as "rhetor" through his or her scholarship and writings contribute to our understanding of our responsibilities as scholars? If scholarship and publications participate in on-going cultural and ecclesiastical conversations on any number of topics— as in many instances they surely do— how does understanding scholarly discourse as *persuasive* contributions to an on-going argument inform scholars' attention to language, to the treatment of sources, and to the "rhetorical situation" in which they find themselves?

In laying out his position on the nature of ecclesiastical history as the archaeology of flesh and blood, Ferriby draws attention to David Tracy's articulation of the method of "mutually critical correlation" and suggests that ecclesiastical history is a discourse and a *theological* process of "learning to ask the sources the right questions and learning to listen to whatever answers they might give" (156).To build on this reference to Tracy, I would also suggest that the ecclesiastical historian is inevitably a participant in theology's conversation with three audiences among "the public": society at large, the academy, and the church.

Awareness of the audiences addressed by scholarship, and of the shape and constraints of the arguments and conversations occurring within those audiences, along with a humble sense of the potential of scholarly work to advance the arguments or alter the reality in which they take place, should make all scholars mindful of the holy ground on which they walk.

Gavin Ferriby's work raises more questions than can be easily answered. Beyond a careful and thoughtful analysis of Boswell's work and the responses it generated, this paper's value lies in these questions. They stamp as "unfinished" the on-going discussion of the nature and craft of ecclesiastical history and challenge all historians to engage in this second-order reflection on their work and its contributions.

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Wounded Flesh and Bleeding Little Toes

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The other day I was listening to a program on the radio. A Harvard doctor found that African Americans die of such diseases as high-blood pressure, stroke and heart attacks at a much younger age and at a much higher rate than the rest of the population. She speculated that this is due to the on-going effects of racial discrimination, internalized anger and tension. It is a simple theory, but is it provable? I wondered if the doctor's sympathy to the exploited, economically marginalized, deprived, culturally alienated, non-recognized and disrespected could really be proven with the methods of modern science (Frazer 1995). Again, the other night I saw a heart-wrenching story on television of Irish Catholic unwed mothers of the 1950's forced to give up their babies to the church, which shipped them to America for adoption. A mother wept as she recounted the moment when her baby was literally ripped away from her embrace by a nun. The church kept all record of these activities secret and only now, forty years later, has the public become aware of what was a widespread practice in Ireland. Trails of evidence were so thoroughly hidden by church authorities that it is hard, even with today's sophisticated methods, to reunite these mothers with their adult children. Why did the church act so mercilessly toward these social outcasts and how could it be so

successful in erasing the history of these recent events? How can the adult-child understand the circumstances and reasons for such behavior?

Gavin Ferriby has surveyed John Boswell's three major works, and the scholarly response to them, from two basic perspectives: first, he asked if Boswell's basic claims still stand, and secondly, he examined Boswell's historical methodology. Ferriby summarized Boswell's major claim in *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality* as that "early and medieval Christianity was not directly the cause of the rise of medieval intolerance [to gay people], but gradually incorporated intolerant views and habits from other sources [such as Roman law, Aristotelian natural law, and the decay of cities]" (1996:156). The central issue in *The Kindness of Strangers* was that "the late antique and medieval custom of leaving children in a public place to fare well or ill according to the kindness of strangers was a common practice, and understanding it sheds important light on obscure, private and sometimes unpleasant aspects of medieval families and societies". Ferriby found these two claims of Boswell to be sound. He also found that except for minor revisable problems, Boswell's overall methodology is appropriate for the study of literature from late antiquity to the medieval age. Boswell, as a social historian of the Middle Ages, had to contend with scant sources, corrupt texts, difficult to interpret manuscripts, sometimes in little-studied languages, and no statistics. In this field scholars often face large gaps in evidence. Boswell supplemented some gaps with what Ferriby called the "notoriously hard to handle" genre of "personal narratives, hagiographies, poetry, and fiction." Ferriby found that sometimes Boswell read too much into these evidences, but his efforts to "excavate" the important but obscure texts need to be acknowledged.

The discussion of the scholarly response to Boswell centered around his methodology. How are readers to deal with clues to the past without engaging in eisegesis for their own benefit, or without bringing a present-day and thus anachronistic language and understanding into the reading of the text? These are vital questions for historians of the medieval period, or any period. What can one know from the records left to us today? Boswell himself recommends in the preface of *The Kindness of Strangers* that professional historians "may wish to skip" his "basic methodological discussion" (Boswell 1988:1). To show how seriously and humorously Boswell saw himself as a historian-archeologist and detective, I quote at length:

> Historians have long been accustomed to playing the paleontologist ... collecting, cleaning, analyzing, and arranging for display the bones of the species they study, in this case those aspects of human society which happen to leave hard remains in the sediments of time: birth certificates, death notices, tax lists, laws, records of public events. (1988:5)

Since these remains may be scant, Boswell suggests a search through the muddy area of human testimonies and fictions for more evidence:

> Would the evidence, when gathered, collated, and carefully analyzed, indicate that it was a familiar reality for them, accidentally or deliberately omitted from historical records, or would it show that it was a "quicksand problem" employed mainly for artistic purposes?... What was (and is) the relationship between the kinds of evidence that do survive... that is, to what extent can historians rely on literary records? (1988:12)

These questions express Boswell's frustrations. What he wants to know is not the right arrangement of the dry bones nor the illusionary effect of the quicksand. He wants to feel the flesh and blood of his subjects:

> But the great bulk of any organic entity is too soft to survive as fossil: the flesh that provided size and shape, the skin and hair that determined appearance, the viscera that governed metabolism and growth, the brain that directed movement and invested life with meaning ... all these are leached from the sediments. (1988:5)

On the same page, he laments that the subjects of his book, namely children, "left impressions too fragile to survive, or no imprints at all." All human records, technical or fictional, may give false clues, intentionally or unconsciously.

Ferriby grasped Boswell's tenderness and sensitivity to the wholeness of human existence as well as to the deceptiveness of human records, noting that "Boswell's major writings taken together offer an impressive and informed attempt to understand the soft tissues of the organic entity of human beings and human societies" (1996:145). Ferriby, as ecclesiastical historian, has extended Boswell's efforts in his own development of the "archaeology of flesh and blood." For Ferriby this understanding of

church history not only encompasses the bones, the theories, and the structure but also allows room for dreams. Going beyond Boswell's realistic feel of the flesh and blood of the children into a "Eucharistic" understanding of the flesh and blood, Ferriby said:

> This "flesh and blood" is the soft tissues of the past, the entrails of motivation, imagination, memory, despair, and hope in every human being, in Jesus, the Christ, and through him the eucharistic community of memory (1996:156).

This understanding allows an ecclesiastical historian to see the deep structures of society from the vision of "social imagination: the kind of world which is named, languaged, and storied" (1996:149). By posing this vision, an ecclesiastical historian can avoid falling into the Whig view of history which assumes that "what is important about the past is usable, and the past is important precisely because part of it is deemed usable" (1996:151). It also poses discourses other than the "hard" Hegelian and positivist metaphor of "the organic development of the idea of Christianity." It then lies elsewhere outside of Hauerwas's moral questions about the trustability of Christian historical knowledge. Both Boswell and Ferriby have located themselves in the tradition of post-*Annalistes* social history in attempting to study the "ideas, lives, and feelings of those not merely unimportant or overlooked in their own day but actively oppressed, silenced, or hidden from view" (Boswell 1992: 90 cited Ferriby 1996:154). The subjects of this tradition are "not just the preserve of bishops, kings, preachers, saints, and councils," but also "homosexuals, Jews, Muslims, women, [and] foundling children." It focuses attention on the "interaction of Christians with each other in evolving patterns of faithfulness, unfaithfulness, vision, blindness, hospitality, and intolerance" (1996:154).

Ferriby presented this interaction of Christians in the context of the "community of flesh and blood, bread and wine." Ecclesiastical historians also believe in the communion of the saints. Using David Tracy's concept of "mutually critical correlations," Ferriby described Christian archaeologists as " living partner[s] in a conversation with the dead, their bones and parchments and guts and brains." Christian archaeologists must have good conversational skill, to ask "the right questions" and to "learn to listen to whatever answers." They also need to be equipped with "a disciplined

imagination which is intrinsically analogical, and a blessed rage for the disorder of the source materials" (Tracy 1981: 404)

Ferriby's contained utopian community of flesh and blood seems to echo in my head the happy tune that ends the movie *The Birdcage*: "We are Family." I have difficulty recognizing such a united Christian community in the history of the Western church, and often doubt the presence of Eucharistic grace in many historical events. I know that much ecclesiastical history took place apart from many of the streams of world history, and wonder how to read the text that suggests the non-Presence of Eucharistic grace outside the church. I am reluctant to be consoled by the promise of the final judgment on the "true" heretics, pagans, heathens, savages, and sub-humans at the conclusion of all histories. But I do agree with Ferriby that the metaphor of the archaeology of flesh and blood communion is more freeing and refreshing than the tight, crisp metaphors of dogmatism. I do like its emphasis on historical imagination and the careful use of all the historical and narrative sources, applying the hermeneutics of suspicion.

I suggest with Paul that in the organic unity of the body of Christ, such seemingly useless parts as little toes have great meaning for the health of the whole body, and that the other parts need to empathize with them if they are injured. I see ecclesiastical history as the stories of the wounded flesh and bleeding little toes. Boswell must have sensed in the scraps of archaeological remains of abandoned children their actual tears, feverish cheeks, sweaty hair, drooling mouths, and the smell of their soiled and tattered clothes. Boswell's mental journey to seek and wash the bloody wounds of part of his own flesh has ended. Is he enjoying real conversation with his subjects now?

Ferriby sought to treat Boswell's academic achievement fairly from the scholarly point of view and found it sound. He suggested that Boswell's archaeological work "with limited time and point of view close to the ground" left incomplete, fragmentary, but trustworthy historical knowledge as one grain of sand. Boswell himself indicated that " the social topography of medieval Europe remains so unexplored that studies of any aspect of it are largely pioneering and hence provisional" and subject to later supplements and revisions (Boswell 1980: 39). Boswell's basic map of the terrain has guided some later detailed regional studies such as Alan Bray's *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* and Judy Brown's "Lesbian Sexuality in Renaissance Italy: The Case of Sister Benedetta Carlini." These new works prove that the fluidity of the human identity and cul-

tures should be seen against the "multidimensional terrains" (Keller 1989:44).

In *The Kindness of Strangers* Boswell innocently and optimistically stated his outlook on the historical works:

> Fortunately for the historian, the court to which his evidence is submitted has no fixed term; interesting cases can be argued before it indefinitely. The jury can remain out for as long as it takes to gather the requisite data and come to a sound decision. Nor is there a prohibition of double jeopardy: the historian can watch with delight or consternating as the case is tried and retried by others, who may prove his hunches right or wrong, untangle knots he would not, set aside his evidence as inadmissable, or call surprise witnesses to the stand. If the original motivation was simply a desire to get to the bottom of a mystery, future revelations will bring satisfaction and delight. (Boswell 1988:22)

But Ferriby had to rescue Boswell's last hastened and much revisable work *Same-Sex Unions* from "damning denunciations" as he vicariously spent an "evening reading some poisonous reviewers" (1996:140). Some demanded an "impossible degree of proof." (1996:141).

As post-Enlightenment post-Darwinian scientists, these reviewers dissected the book, cutting up the flesh with precision, grinding the bones objectively, paralyzing the nerves lest subjectivity should interfere, removing the blood for lab work in search of abnormal cells or to explain the lack of an organ. Such scientists approached with inherent suspicion the parts of the body that appeared unlike their own (of homosexuals, aboriginals, children or women), and felt no pain as they excoriated the skin in order to lay out the "truth" in a flat single dimension. Even if they shared the same strong interest in the mystery and history of human sexuality with other contemporary intellectuals, their interest, seeming neutral and clean, was easily scandalized by any signs of a possibly contaminating "abnormality." Many scholars now aspire more to the stance of the Harvard doctor who wants to explain physical phenomena by means of a sympathetic gaze on the marginalized, looking for signs of abnormality and oppression in history in order to heal them. But healing is needed less for the subjects of history than for historians themselves, who are so impatient with each other. Is a hostile and intolerant terrain being created

by some of our professional conversations on the subjects and sources of history? If so, we scholars are only adding a page to the history of the wounded flesh and the bleeding little toes.

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Beyond Liberalism & Fundamentalism: How Modern and Postmodern Philosophy Set the Theological Agenda. By Nancey Murphy. Trinity Press International, 1996, 162 pages.

In *Beyond Liberalism & Fundamentalism*, Nancey Murphy attempts to explore the nature of the rift in American Christianity between theological liberals and conservatives. Murphy, Associate Professor of Christian Philosophy at Fuller Theological Seminary, sees these two camps as forming a "two-party" system, a system comprised of two poles of theological "paradigms" (Preface, ix). Murphy's intent is to explain the source of this division by examining the philosophical assumptions that lie behind each theological position. *Beyond Liberalism and Fundamentalism* is divided into two primary sections, each comprised of three chapters. In the first section Murphy attempts to show how philosophical assumptions of the modern period caused the bifurcation of American Christianity into these two exclusive theological positions. The second section attempts to demonstrate that the modern philosophical assumptions that drove these theological positions have now been called into question, and that a postmodern critique of such assumptions can give rise to new possibilities for solving long-standing theological problems endemic to fundamentalism and liberalism and perhaps hold out the possibility of reconciliation between liberal and conservative theologians.

Murphy's book addresses three areas in which modern philosophical presuppositions have affected the theological discipline: 1) epistemology; 2) philosophy of language; and 3) metaphysics, specifically in regard to divine action. Murphy's first chapter clarifies the history and nature of *foundationalism*, which she sees as the characteristic epistemological position of the modern period. Like a number of other current philosophers, Murphy traces the history of the modern period as beginning with Descartes (d. 1650) and coming to an end in the 1950's with the development of critiques of foundationalism such as that of W. V. O. Quine. Murphy argues that while fundamentalists and liberals differ radically in their understanding of what is ultimately authoritative for theological formulation, both in fact adopted a similar foundationalist epistemology, i.e., one that seeks to provide a universally valid grounding for religion by establishing a class of beliefs free from challenge and that then reasons deductively from such fundamental beliefs to more specific beliefs in a one-directional manner. For conservatives, *Scripture* served as the foundation

for theological refection, its indubitable status established by an appeal to miracles and prophetic fulfillment and safe-guarded through a doctrine of verbal inspiration and inerrancy and/or infallibility. The premier example of such a foundationalist conservative theology was the Princeton Theology of Charles and Archibald Alexander Hodge, drawing upon common-sense realism. A different foundation for theological refection was adopted by liberalism, namely, *experience*. Such experience had to be free from challenge, underlying all religious manifestations, and unmediated. Doctrines were derived from such an experience in a single-directional manner. This liberal theological tradition was begun by Schleiermacher and continued by such American theologians as Shailer Matthews and Harry Emerson Fosdick. Murphy states that both conservatives and liberals were plagued by difficulties due to their adoption of a foundationalist epistemology. For conservatives, historical criticism and skepticism undermined an assurance in the unquestionable certainty of Scripture's status as propositional revelation, while the experiential grounding of liberalism was always in danger of subsuming theology into anthropology and thereby falling prey Feuerbach's critique of religion.

Murphy develops similar arguments in chapters two and three. In chapter two, Murphy shows how differing theological epistemological bases led to different understandings of the nature of religious language. Conservatives, taking Scripture as the norm for theology, understood theological language in a *propositional* sense, as describing or *referring* to supernatural realities, even if in an imperfect manner. Liberals, taking a specific form of experience as theology's norm, understood theological language in an *expressivist* sense; doctrines are, in Schleiermacher's famous phrase, "accounts of the Christian religious affections set forth in speech" (p. 46). Such differing theories of the nature of religious language led in turn to different convictions regarding the revisability of doctrine. Conservatives, holding that doctrine refers to unchanging supernatural realities, are generally traditionalists with regard to doctrine. Liberals, on the other hand, tend to emphasize the historical contingency of religious language and therefore primarily see theology as a discipline that seeks to translate religious experience into new conceptual frameworks. Murphy states that liberals thus focus upon the existential and experiential nature of religious language, in contrast to the propositional or cognitive focus of the conservatives. Both positions, Murphy contends, are inadequate understandings of the nature of theological language. Conservatives fail to

appreciate the confessional and "self-involving character of religious language," while the existential focus of liberal theologians neglects the propositional and factual claims that theology must make if it is not to become merely self-referential to the experience of the individual speaker and thereby uninteresting to others.

In chapter three Murphy examines the conservative and liberal reactions to the modern scientific understanding of a closed universe, one in which all events are governed by universal laws, and specifically the laws of physics. Such a reductionistic understanding of causation, along with an atomistic metaphysical theory, entailed a materialistic and deterministic view of the world, one that had no place for "outside" divine acts. Murphy holds that both conservatives and liberals basically accepted this view of the universe, but they then understood divine action very differently. Against a deterministic materialism conservatives emphasized the sovereignty of God and God's over-arching purposes in suspending the laws in specific events; they thus held to the historicity of specific miracles. Liberals saw such a view no only as scientifically irresponsible but as unbefitting to God's nature - why would God suspend the laws God established? Rather than adopting the conservatives' *interventionism*, the liberals espoused an *immanentist* understanding of divine action and stressed God's continual action in all the forces of nature and God's original ordering of the world. Again, Murphy finds both positions problematic. Conservative interventionism either makes God one force among others, or else questions the deterministic view of the universe without providing a viable alternative. Liberal immanentism, on the other hand, is in danger of losing God's intentionality in action altogether, or else makes every action intentional - "devastating earthquakes and the Holocaust as well as the growth of crops and the birth of Jesus" (p. 81).

In the second division of the book, Murphy attempts to show how postmodern epistemological, linguistic, and metaphysical alternatives to foundationalism, representative and expressive theories of language, and metaphysical and causal reductionism provide theology with new possibilities to transcend the problems of the bifurcated positions outlined in part one. It is important to note what Murphy does *not* mean by postmodernism - she eschews the deconstructionism of the Continental tradition and attempts to draw upon what she holds is a development thoroughly within Anglo-American philosophy. So in chapter four, *epistemological holism* is set over against foundationalism, and Murphy discusses

the work of Quine to show how such a holist epistemology can circumvent the skepticism that plagues foundationalism. But while the danger of skepticism is adverted, a new danger is introduced, namely, that of relativism, for we can imagine rival "webs of belief", in Quinean terms, that provide equally coherent positions. Murphy believes that the problem of relativism pertains not only to Quine's work, but also to postliberal theologians such as George Lindbeck, whose conception of truth displays this tendency towards relativism. While Lindbeck, as Quine, understands truth as internal coherence, he provides no answer to how rival belief systems can be compared. Murphy proffers the work of Imre Lakatos and especially Alasdair MacIntyre as providing resources for the adjudication of various belief systems, and she argues that a historicist-holist epistemology embraced by theology provides a place *both* for Scripture and experience without falling into skepticism by making either a "foundation" for theological reflection.

Murphy next considers alternative approaches to representative and expressive theories of language. Drawing upon the work of the later Wittgenstein, as well as that of J. L. Austin, Murphy argues that an examination of religious language must begin with how that language actually functions. Examining how language is *used* allows one to appreciate *both* the referential and expressive dimensions of language and to realize that the use of language is not exhausted by these two dimensions.

But does a theory that focuses upon language as use entail relativism? How do we know that our language refers to reality? Murphy notes that these questions illustrate the primary criticism brought against post-modern theologies, and specifically, postliberalism, which examines the regulative function of doctrine. Murphy answers these questions by arguing that categorical frameworks necessarily presuppose metaphysical claims, stating that to conceive of doctrines as "grammatical rules governing the use of the Christian conceptual scheme cannot fail to entail or presuppose beliefs about reality. In other words, doctrines by their very nature as *rules* carry propositional content" (p. 130).

The final chapter examines recent developments in science with implications for the understanding of divine action. Murphy notes that scientists are increasingly aware of the *non-reductive* nature of the different levels of complex systems. Otherwise stated, the properties and processes investigated by the "higher" sciences, such as biology, cannot be analytically and exhaustively explained by the laws of the "lower" sciences, such

as physics, but instead require their own concepts and analysis. This recognition of emergent order, along with that of "top-down" causation (i.e., higher-level processes supervening upon those at lower levels), have caused many scientists to abandon the view that the universe is best understood as a reductive, deterministic system. The demise of the theory seeing the universe as a closed-system entails that theologians have other options for understanding divine action besides those of interventionism and immanentism. Murphy notes two such strategies. One position, such as that of Arthur Peacocke, sees God as interacting with the world in a "top-down" manner, affecting the world as a whole. Murphy herself thinks that this is a problematic approach, subject to pantheistic and dualist understandings of God's relation to the world. The second approach is the one Murphy herself sees as most promising, an exploration of God's action at the quantum level, either alone or in conjunction with top-down causation. Such an approach preserves *both* God's intentionality in specific actions and God's continual sustaining of the causal order.

Clearly written and well-argued, *Beyond Liberalism and Fundamentalism* will be of interest not only to philosophers of religion and systematic theologians, but also to church historians who are interested in an analysis of the intellectual issues underlying American fundamentalism and liberalism. As such, it provides a philosophical complement to the historical work of scholars such as Martin E. Marty and George Marsden. Murphy's examination of the philosophical assumptions behind American fundamentalism and liberalism is compellingly argued and cogently presented. A work of this nature does, however, have limitations that must be noted. First, a study that deals with "ideal types" (Murphy's term p. 6) is prone to over-simplify the actual historical situation. While we can validly speak of the "propositional" tendencies of fundamentalists and the "experiential" tendencies of liberals, the actual history of these movements is of course much more complex. One only needs to remember that it was none other than the fundamentalists who stressed the essential need for "born-again" experiences while charging that "liberals" were too "intellectual" (not a compliment!). Also, no mention of Walter Rauschenbusch or the Social Gospel Movement can be found in this book, although they maintain an important place in the development of American Christianity. A second limitation of such a work is that it cannot do full justice to individual theological figures: some will question Murphy's "foundationalist" reading of Schleiermacher (although they must note that her claims are

carefully nuanced—p. 52). Murphy's difficulty in placing Barth within her paradigm stems precisely from the fact that a richer paradigm is needed to do so. That is to say, the road from Kant leads not only to Schleiermacher, but also to Barth (p. 5). Still, it would be wrong to fault Murphy for what she never intended to provide, a comprehensive history of modern theology, and she herself notes that exceptions to her paradigm can, of course, be found. So, with its limitations in mind, it can be said that as a self-restricted study in modern American Protestant theology, the work insightfully fulfills its purpose.

The appraisal of Murphy's suggestions for future theological work will no doubt depend upon one's acceptance of her own philosophical position and convictions. These include: an acceptance of a holist epistemology, a recognition of the tradition-dependent nature of rationality; the success of Wittgenstein's argument against private language; the rejection of Donald Davidson's argument against radical incommensurability; and the promise of an examination of God's action at the quantum level. Such an appraisal must be left to the reader, as each of these positions remain under debate.

One cannot help but think that this work is an attempt to retain the insights of postliberalism while correcting its serious flaws, especially in regard to the nature of truth and the question of relativism. Murphy herself notes that it is the question of justification and truth that require the most attention for any postmodern theology to be viable (p. 155). Perhaps it would be best to see Murphy's work not as an outright rejection of past theories but as one that incorporates them into a larger and more comprehensive framework: Scripture *and* experience in regard to theological reflection (though also tradition); reference *and* expression in regard to religious language (though also confession, promise, and so forth); intentionality *and* scientific viability in regard to divine action (recognizing that God's actions do not exclude other levels of explanation). As such a work, it provides not only a study of the past, but original proposals for the future.

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The Language of Faith: Essays on Jesus, Theology, and the Church. By Edward Schillebeeckx. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995, 264 pages.

Edward Schillebeeckx is without doubt one of the giants of twentieth-century Catholic theology. Nonetheless, for most Protestant theologians he remains one of the "greats" we never actually read. His latest volume, *The Language of Faith: Essays on Jesus, Theology, and the Church*, provides an excellent opportunity to rectify this situation. These essays are drawn from the journal *Concilium*, which Schillebeeckx helped found along with Yves Congar, Karl Rahner and Hans Küng. The essays are arranged chronologically, starting in 1964 and going through 1989. What makes this volume so interesting is the fact that the reader can trace Schillebeeckx's development on these themes by working through the chronologically arranged collection.

One of the prominent themes of this collection is the tension between the universal and the particular. How is it that Christians can underwrite the working for justice for all people and yet do so out of the particular commitments of the Christian faith? This theme is prominent in the first essay, a 1964 piece entitled "The Church and Mankind." Here we see Schillebeeckx working primarily out of Rahner's "Anonymous Christian" framework, calling the world an "implicit Christianity" within the plan of salvation. He also uses a literary analogy, calling the human community "an early rough-draft of the Church that is to come." He clearly attempts to broaden the notion of the church to something more than traditional hierarchical categories, but it is still the church in its visible form that is the center of God's plan for salvation.

In a 1973 essay, "Critical Theories and Christian Political Commitment," the reader can see Schillebeeckx's struggles with the Enlightenment world in which he was trained, seeing both the value of criticizing that viewpoint while trying to incorporate the new theology of liberation which was just coming to the fore. Schillebeeckx argues in this piece that one cannot conceive of a Christianity that is not "at one with the movement to emancipate mankind." Yet he does not think such a situation can obtain without Christians doing so out of Christian commitment.

These themes are brought together in their most constructive form in the last essay, a 1989 piece: "The Religious and the Human Ecumene." The question he poses is how the continued existence of "religions" can promote human well-being. The fact that the coexistence of religions in

the past has proved often to be destructive to human community makes this a difficult task. The guiding vision for how religion might serve positively in this regard comes from Gutiérrez who understands the church as a "sacrament of the world" in connection with "the option for the poor."

The purpose of the essay is to come to a proper self-definition of Christianity vis-à-vis other religions that does not devolve into absolutism or relativism. Schillebeeckx wants to hold to some commonalities of religion without appealing to either an essentialist or nominalist framework. Instead, he appeals to Wittgenstein, speaking of "family resemblances" among religions. Each religion is "really unique" but shares enough resemblances with other "religions" that they can be compared with one another. But if Schillebeeckx accepts this "lower" form of religious commonality, then he has a theoretical problem: How to account for coexistence, especially a coexistence that promotes the vision for religion that Schillebeeckx is promoting?

It is at this point that Schillebeeckx makes his most creative move. He christologically argues for a non-christomonistic understanding of salvation. He posits that Christians find their "only rescue in Jesus confessed as the Christ." Scripture is clear that Jesus stands in a constitutive relationship to the reign of God for all people. One cannot thus disregard the absolute claims made for Christ in the name of poetic license. However, Schillebeeckx maintains one must distinguish the "proper claim to universality" in Christianity from the imperialism manifested in the ecclesiastical claim of absoluteness. It is this latter form that has been the "cause of religious wars and persecution." So what do we make of the other religions? Schillebeeckx rejects the idea that adherents of such are saved "in spite of" their religion. Instead he picks up on *Lumen Gentium* and argues in contrast to the tradition that "outside the world, there is no salvation." Human beings mediate the history of salvation in the world through religions. That is, it is salvation history that is prior to all human religions.

Schillebeeckx cannot admit to a mere tolerance. Tolerance can grow not only out of a deep desire for the "human ecumene" and the option for the poor but also out of indifference: "This is an attitude without the courage of the witnessing blood of martyrs" (p. 255). Nonetheless, Schillebeeckx believes that the current *Zeitgeist* has impressed upon Christianity something that is actually "inherent in the essence of Christianity": the positive value of the diversity of religions. Schillebeeckx argues that the contingent and thus historically limited character of Christianity flows

from the limited particularity of Jesus of Nazareth. Thus the gift of salvation coming through Jesus is limited and particular. If one tries to counter this position by arguing for salvation coming universally through Christ, then one is forced to hold that the Jesus is a "necessary" emanation of the divine, and all religions disappear into a void. This argument is the linchpin for this essay. It is an argument inherent to Christianity itself, and is thus an internal basis for genuine pluralism. Thus the gift of God's reign to the entire world does not consist of absolutizing the particular manifestation in Jesus Christ. He makes a move reminiscent of Tillich's Protestant Principle, arguing that "no single historical particularity can be called absolute" and thus that every person can encounter God outside of Jesus. What is the relative value of religions? Schillebeeckx argues that there is more truth in all the religions taken together than in any particular one. And thus the plurality of religions is not an evil to be overcome, but is instead a "fructifying richness to be welcomed by all" (p. 258).

What strikes me overall in this volume is how consonant much of Schillebeeckx's thought is with the liberal Protestant tradition. Neither Schleiermacher nor Tillich have entries in the index; nonetheless, I see their thought, if not their direct influence throughout these essays. The last essay especially reflects the same kind of analysis that characterizes Tillich's reflections on the New Being present in world religions. This is not to say that Tillich and Schillebeeckx are identical on these issues, but simply to point out that Schillebeeckx has some striking "family resemblances" to liberal Protestantism. For those of us who find liberal Protestantism to be a wrong turn, it is not encouraging to see Roman Catholic theology moving in the same direction.

This volume can be of great assistance to anyone in theology. For those who need a primer on currents in contemporary Roman Catholic theology, this is an ideal volume to start with. For those who are concerned about the relationship between the particularity of the Christian Gospel and church and pluralism, Schillebeeckx's reflections are an important contribution. His is a helpful antidote to the kind of sentimental religious pluralism that often dominates the discussion even in academic circles. While I would not endorse all of Schillebeeckx's theological project, I can easily endorse the volume as quite worthwhile reading.

—CHARLES A. WILEY
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

No Graven Image?: Israelite Aniconism in Its Ancient Near Eastern Context. Tryggve N. D. Mettinger. Coniectanea Biblica Old Testament Series 42. Almqvist and Wiksell International, 1995, 252 pages.

Mettinger's latest monograph makes painfully clear how perilous it is to label something in Israelite religion "unique." As time and scholarship have progressed, one after another of these "unique" aspects have disappeared into the general religious milieu of the ancient Near East (ANE). Perhaps the most well-known of these disappearing acts was YHWH's activity in history. This—according to scholars such as G. Ernest Wright—was long held to be an especially Israelite notion. Bertil Albrektson, however, showed just how wrong such an assertion was. So it too, like the uniqueness of so many other concepts before it, "went the way of all flesh."

"Uniqueness" continues to play an important role in scholarship on Israelite religion, despite the fact that the underlying reasons for its importance or centrality are rarely, if ever, discussed. Perhaps the most perduring of the "unique" elements is Israel's aniconic cult; that is to say, the prohibition on images of the deity (e.g., Exod 20:4-6, 22-23; 34:17; Lev 19:4; 26:1; Deut 5:8-10; 27:15; etc.; cf. also Deut 4:9-40, esp. 4:12, 15-19, 23-24, 28, 33, 36). This aspect has long been touted as one of the most significant contributions of Israelite religion. But with the appearance of Mettinger's *No Graven Image?*, students of the Bible must now seriously question the uniqueness of Israelite aniconism. Mettinger has convincingly shown how earlier assumptions regarding Israelite uniqueness on this point are unfounded. In so doing, he demonstrates how a claim for uniqueness can and cannot be made and demonstrates both the problem and promise of such an endeavor.

Mettinger begins by drawing several methodological distinctions that are crucial for the rest of his work. The first of these is a distinction between *de facto* aniconism and programmatic aniconism (p. 18). The former is basically tolerant of or "indifferent" to iconic worship (particularly among neighbors) and turns out to be a part of a larger (primarily) West Semitic aniconic phenomenon. Programmatic aniconism is what one generally associates with iconoclasm or "iconophobia." Mettinger—largely dependent on the work of C. Dohmen—grants that programmatic aniconism is a late, probably Deuteronomistic, product. Even so "the veto on images is formulated on the basis of a prior tradition of aniconism as a conventional practice" (p. 16). *De facto* aniconism, then, especially given

its roots in West Semitic cults, may be an ancient entity, even in the Israelite cultus. The second distinction Mettinger draws is between material aniconism and empty-space aniconism. The former uses some sort of material (e.g., a standing stone [bethyl, massebah, etc.], meteorite, symbol/emblem), while the latter uses nothing, designating only an open or empty area wherein the deity is presumably made manifest (p. 19).

Armed with these distinctions and some carefully considered definitions of aniconism (pp. 18-23), cultic representations (pp. 26-27), and other introductory matters (chap. I), Mettinger examines a wealth of comparative evidence with an eye toward three questions (p. 38): 1) Is the cult in question aniconic or does it have aniconic tendencies; if so, of what type is this aniconism (i.e., material or empty-space aniconism)?; 2) Is the aniconism *de facto* or programmatic in nature?; and 3) Might there be evidence of direct influence of this cult on ancient Israelite religion? Mettinger's quest takes him from Mesopotamia and Egypt (chap. II), to the Nabateans (chap. III) and Pre-Islamic Arabia (chap. IV), to Spain and the Phoenician-Punic world (chap. V), and finally to Bronze Age Syria (chap. VI). The data Mettinger collects from these areas yields the following answers to his three main questions:

Mesopotamia: 1) There is some evidence of material aniconic tendencies especially during the Kassite period, but for the most part Mesopotamia used anthropomorphic categories. 2) There is thus no evidence of programmatic aniconism; even the aniconic tendencies that do exist are not *de facto* aniconism proper, with the possible exceptions of Kassite aniconism and the cult of Ashur. 3) There is probably no direct influence of these aniconic tendencies on Israel (pp. 55-56).

Egypt: 1) This region yeilds some evidence of material aniconism centering on the deities Aten and Amun. 2) Corroborative textual material shows that there is some evidence of programmatic aniconism, especially in the Amarna theology. 3) Aten and Amun were known in Palestine, hence some direct influence on Israel may be likely. However, the Amarna period was short lived and the predominance of Egyptian iconography is anthropomorphic or theriomorphic/zoomorphic and this limits possible influence (p. 56).

The Nabateans: 1) Clear evidence exists for a material aniconic cult. 2) Additionally, there is evidence of programmatic aniconism (anthropomorphic representations are the result of Greek or Roman influence).

3) While Nabatean aniconism is too late for direct influence on early Israel, it may be reflective of a general West Semitic aniconism (p. 68).

Pre-Islamic Arabia: 1) While the evidence is beset by a number of problems, it seems safe to argue for material aniconic worship in pre-Islamic times (p. 78). 2) It is possible to identify a development from *de facto* aniconism (pre-Islamic) to programmatic aniconism (Islam). 3) Like the Nabatean data, this information may be indicative of a common West Semitic religious aniconism—one which was a progenitor of both the Judaic and Islamic strains. Given the type of material aniconism present in Arabia ("stone cults of the desert"), attention must be paid to Palestinian cults centered on standing stones (pp. 78-79).

Phoenician-Punic World: 1) This world again witnesses to material aniconism with the first clear evidence of empty-space aniconism. 2) Given some examples of anthropomorphism, *de facto* aniconism is apparently the only type present. 3) In the light of its geographical proximity, as well as its empty-space aniconism, there is a strong possibility that Phoenician aniconism influenced Israelite religion, especially in the architecture of Solomon's temple and the fashioning of the empty cherubim throne (p. 139). Even so, Mettinger thinks that Israelite *de facto* aniconism probably preceded any direct Phoenician influence (pp. 112-13).

Syrian Bronze Age Cities: 1) There is a growing amount of data that indicates that standing stones (material aniconism) played an important role in such places as Mari, Ebla, and Emar. 2) These seem to be tolerant *de facto* aniconic cults (pp. 132-34). 3) Mettinger argues that the Bronze Age Syrian context is the most likely candidate for direct influence on Israelite religion insofar as these aniconic cults are again indicative of a West Semitic context for the broader aniconic phenomenon (pp. 135-40).

These conclusions draw Mettinger back to Israel (chap. VII). The data has shown a high frequency of *de facto* material aniconic cults focussed on standing stones. Mettinger finds this to be the case with Israel as well. After an exhaustive survey of the "Israelite Masseboth Cult" Mettinger is able to conclude that "early Israelite worship is a variant of the West Semitic cult....*Israelite aniconism is just another case in point of the wider phenomenon traced in the previous parts of this study: ancient West Semitic aniconism in the form of cults centred on standing stones*" (pp. 193-94; emphasis his). This leads to three important consequences: 1) *de facto* Israelite aniconism is ancient, indeed "as old as Israel itself". Programmatic aniconism is a logical conclusion to this "long development," but

this development is somewhat ironic since it turns against the massebah cult to which it owes its historical existence (p. 194). 2) Israelite aniconism is not the result of Israel's theological ingenuity but is simply another example of its shared Semitic heritage. 3) *De facto* aniconism is not a uniquely Israelite phenomenon (p. 195). Even so, Mettinger goes on to point out that programmatic aniconism, at least to the extent that Israel took it, *is* distinctly Israelite—apart, that is, from the parallel development in Islam (p. 196).

Mettinger's book is a *tour de force* that handles an immense amount of data with a subtlety and brilliance that is rarely found in the work of a single scholar. It is copiously documented with primary and secondary sources and includes an extensive bibliography and over 70 illustrations. Despite this praise, the book is not without its flaws. One notes, for example, that the treatment of the Mesopotamian and Egyptian evidence is rather thin compared to the other chapters. Since one of Mettinger's arguments is that *de facto* aniconism is an early phenomenon this evidence needs to be engaged in fuller fashion. Diachronically, comparative data from Egypt and Mesopotamia seems much more important than, say, Nabatean coinage of the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C.E. Moreover, one might well ask after the ultimate source of the West Semitic cultic aniconism. Again, a closer look at the superpowers of the fertile crescent may prove more useful and influential than Mettinger's presentation would seem to allow.

It is exactly this data that also makes one wonder about Mettinger's distinction between *de facto* and programmatic aniconism. For example, it is interesting to note that in ANE monumental art one finds the trend toward aniconism increasing at the end of the Bronze Age. At approximately the same time Akenaten is in power in Amarna Egypt. Why, then, must Israelite programmatic aniconism be only a late development relating to the exile? It may also be significant that the Egyptian and Mesopotamian aniconic tendencies in this period favor astral imagery. Strikingly, the first type of condemned imagery in the Second Commandment is "the form of anything that is in heaven above." In short, there may be textual and artistic material that would warrant a reconsideration of a late dating of programmatic aniconism.

These criticisms notwithstanding, Mettinger's work convincingly places the aniconic element of Israelite religion in its historical and religious context. It functions as a further reminder to biblical scholars to

pay attention to iconographical evidence. The bulk of Mettinger's data was not unearthed last week. Rather, it has long been available, but biblical scholarship has often been so myopically textual that it has ignored other types of *realia*. Mettinger's work can now be added to that of Othmar Keel, Christoph Uehlinger, and others as definitively demonstrating the fruitful and mutually informative relationship that can exist between textual and artistic research.

— BRENT A. STRAWN
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Paul the Apostle to America: Cultural Trends and Pauline Scholarship. By Robert Jewett. Westminster/John Knox, 1994, 178 pages.

Influenced by the apostle Paul's assertion to become "all things to all people" and by the adaptability of Paul's theology to diverse cultures, Jewett sets out to establish an "American approach" which will enable critical Pauline scholarship to interact with the cultural setting of the United States. The task of liberating Pauline theology from the "Eurocentric view" that has long dominated it is, in Jewett's view, an important one at a time when American culture is breaking free of its European roots. So he has consciously undertaken to write a book "shaped by trends in American culture rather than ... alternate interpretations of Pauline theology" (p. xi). Jewett's interest in relating Pauline scholarship to American culture, evident already in the companion to the present volume (*Saint Paul at the Movies*, 1993), emerged during his student years at Tübingen, crystallizing in the conviction that "part of the problem in properly understanding Paul derives from features in European culture itself" (p. 4).

And so he begins the first of the book's two major sections, "Pauline Scholarship Interacting with Cultural Trends," by offering important insights concerning features of European culture, drawing heavily upon the work of Stuart Miller (*Painted in Blood: Understanding Europeans*, 1987). Jewett characterizes as "defensiveness" the European intellectual tradition's "tendency to have a well-worked-out view point, a philosophy, about virtually any subject" (p. 4). In this regard, he speaks of the inclination among some European scholars to think of Paul as a "systematician" when in fact he is more appropriately construed as "flexible" and a "conversational thinker." The legacy of this tendency is, among other things,

the "eristic" posture (advancing one's ideas like a battalion of tanks) of some European intellectuals in advancing their ideas on Paul (American intellectuals are described as "irenic," i.e. seeking common ground). One consequence of this eristic inclination is to view Paul's literary style as marked by an appeal to "authority" in defense of his positions rather than to appreciate his persuasive strategies and rhetorical skills. Jewett cautions that the distorted image of Paul as "the great man" is not the sole responsibility of the European tradition. Both the book of Acts and the Pastoral epistles have contributed to this misrepresentation.

The core of Jewett's book is not a critique of European culture, however, but an effort to demonstrate how Paul can function to his full potential as the "apostle to America." Paul's role within the American context has suffered for a number of reasons, including: a paucity of preaching on Paul, confusion between the dogmatic Paul of the Pastorals and the Paul of the authentic letters, complaints about the "difficult Paul," scorn for Paul as an authoritarian chauvinist "out of step with democratic egalitarian society," accusations against Paul as the father of anti-semitism; and suspicion within the African American community that Paul supports the institution of slavery. These negative perceptions persist despite the work of redeeming the apostle by a number of Jewish and Christian American scholars, including E. P. Sanders, J.C. Beker, W. A. Meeks, S. Sandmel, R. L. Reubenstein, and A. F. Segal.

Jewett takes on several of these misconceptions. For example, he lifts up the themes of the law, Paul's conversion, and Israel's future in Paul's letters to draw out their relevance for the coexistence of Jews and Christians in the American context. First, he insists that Paul's critique of the law was an apology for his mission, not a polemic against the Jews. Second, Paul's conversion involved a move away from conformity to the law rather than an inability to fulfill it. Such a conversion does not necessarily entail the abolition of cultural distinctions. Thus, Christ is interpreted as the "goal"—not the "end"—of the law according to Rom. 10:4. Indeed, faith can be pursued without the repudiation of the Torah if zealotism is avoided. Third, Israel's salvation does not depend upon Jews accepting Jesus as the Messiah and abandoning their theological and cultural distinctiveness. Instead, they too must turn away from zealotism. Jewett argues that the implication of his construal of Paul for the American scene is the preservation of "distinctive features of racial, cultural, and theological self-identity within the context of mutual acceptance" (p. 4).

Next Jewett offers a treatment of the sexual liberation of Paul and his churches, and discusses the implications this may have on the role of women in the church. By placing Paul's letters in chronological sequence—based on the theory of seven portions of Corinthian correspondence that is not widely accepted—he detects a development in Paul's thinking about the role of women in the church. Paul began firmly anchored in patriarchal tradition, then evolved into a stage of "equality in principle" in the mid-fifties, and reached in the mature years of his ministry a stage of "consistent equality." The legacy of Paul's sexual liberation was lost in the deutero-Pauline tradition (with 1 Cor 14:33b-36 taken as an interpolation by the school behind the Pastorals), marking a "climactic stage in the rise of sexual repression in Early Christianity." Jewett's textual analysis results in a healthy challenge to the present church to recover Paul's theological legacy.

With regard to the question of slavery, Jewett cautions against reading 1 Cor 7:21-24 and Phlm 10-18, which are "ambiguous in their support of slavery," in light of the deutero-Pauline letters. He reads such phrases as "appeal," "nothing by compulsion," and "nothing without your consent" in Philemon as subverting the entire system of domination and as demonstrating the rhetorically persuasive qualities of the revolutionary apostle who was calling for the freedom of his church members.

In the second major section of the book, "New Pauline Resources for the American Future," Jewett sheds some light on the organizational structure of the early Pauline communities (the "tenement churches"). Inspired by archaeological and sociological studies, the author concludes that the early Pauline communities were predominantly slave communities whose members lived in slum areas. They held communal meals, shared common kitchens, and were financially responsible for sustaining the entire community. It is this type of "agapaic communalism" that Jewett challenges the contemporary American church to recover. As Paul's conversion freed him from the law, so should we be discharged from the law of consumerism that (negatively) dominates North America and clouds human relationships.

As a Lebanese national studying in the United States, I identify with Jewett's cross-cultural experience at Tübingen. To my surprise, much of what he describes as "European features" is also evident in traditional American academic institutions. "Defensiveness" and egocentricity characterize many educators, male and female, in the guild of theological edu-

cation. I would hope that Jewett's analysis of the European intellectual tradition be taken seriously, not so much as a reference to European culture but as an attestation of human nature and its plight. Further, even though his concern is to salvage Paul from charges of "anti-semitism," Jewett continues to use the term as an illustration of a particular attitude toward *Jews*. As someone who identifies himself as both a Christian and a Semite, I am suspicious of this usage: "anti-semite" is different than "anti-Jewish," just as "anti-Jewish" is different than "anti-Israeli." Finally, the reader at times gets the impression that certain trends in American culture (i.e. higher education) are forced upon Paul. Nevertheless, Jewett must be commended for his creativity and ability to appropriate Paul for the American context. Because his approach brings fresh insights to the interpretation of Paul's thought, more is needed from this author; Paul must be heard with regard to various other issues currently at the forefront of American culture, such as homosexuality and the various forms of domestic abuse.

This book is recommended to all who love Paul, whether they are American or not. For those who struggle with Paul, it is an opportunity to reconsider many misconceptions about the "apostle to America."

—JOHNNY B. AWWAD
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith. Edited by R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black. Westminster/John Knox, 1996, xxxiv and 409 pages.

There could be no more fitting tribute to one of the doyens of Johannine studies than this volume of twenty essays on the Fourth Gospel. That focusing on John is appropriate for a *Festschrift* celebrating D. Moody Smith's sixty-fifth birthday is borne out by the selected bibliography of his works compiled by Robert Kysar (p. xvi-xxvii); over half of the 115 publications listed there (from more than 180 books, essays, reviews, etc., published between 1963-1995) are devoted to the Johannine corpus. In addition, Smith co-chaired *SNTS's* Johannine Seminar from 1980-1986,

chaired SBL's Johannine Section from 1981-87, and has been the editor of *RSR's* "Christian Origins: Johannine Studies" since 1975. In the introductory essay highlighting Smith's contributions to the field, Kysar points out that the honoree's interest in Johannine literature began early in his career with a 1964 *NTS* article, "The Sources of the Gospel of John: An Assessment of the Present State of the Problem," followed in 1965 by his understandable and insightful monograph analyzing Bultmann's source theory, *The Composition and Order of the Fourth Gospel: Bultmann's Literary Theory*. Actually even earlier than noted in Kysar's essay, Smith published "John 12:12ff. and the Question of John's Use of the Synoptics" in *JBL* (1963). And while the related questions of the sources underlying John's gospel and its relationship to the synoptics have continued to command Smith's attention over the years, Kysar is quick to remind us that his scholarship has run the gamut of Johannine issues.

It is for this reason that the editors chose to organize the book in five parts representing major themes in Johannine studies, all of them addressed by Smith at some time: (1) The History and Character of the Johannine Community (essays by Marianne Meye Thompson, W. D. Davies, James H. Charlesworth, Peder Borgen, J. Louis Martyn); (2) The Traditions of the Fourth Gospel (Johannes Beutler, C. K. Barrett, Fernando F. Segovia); (3) Literary Aspects of John's Gospel (R. Alan Culpepper, Eduard Schweizer, C. Clifton Black, Beverly Roberts Gaventa); (4) The Theology of the Fourth Gospel (Paul W. Meyer, Leander E. Keck, Stephen S. Smalley, James D. G. Dunn); (5) Appropriating the Proclamation of the Gospel of John (Wayne A. Meeks, Hans Weder, John Painter). The list of contributors, distinguished New Testament scholars all, is further testimony of the esteem in which Smith is held by his colleagues in the academy and church.

A brief look at an essay from each part of the volume should suffice as a sample of the variety of themes taken up in this collection. Martyn revisits the question of John's community (Part One) in his essay, "A Gentile Mission That Replaced an Earlier Jewish Mission?" Here he reaffirms the thesis, argued most notably in his 1968 classic, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, that the Johannine group was made up of "Christian Jews ... (who) became a discrete community of Jewish Christians" after their expulsion from the synagogue (p. 125). They were perhaps interested in evangelizing Godfearers, but not in beginning a distinctive mission to Gentiles.

After his comparative analysis, "The Parallels between Acts and John" (Part Two), Barrett draws the conclusion that the Gospel of John touches the synoptic and, therefore, the Great Church, tradition. This was not just an isolated group on the margins of first century Christianity—though in some ways it was this, too. It is instructive and important for understanding various themes in the Gospel "to place John correctly within the general stream of Christian tradition" (p. 175).

The literary section (Part Three) includes Black's analysis of the discourse style of the Johannine Jesus in "'The Words That You Gave to Me I Have Given to Them': The Grandeur of Johannine Rhetoric." Black summarizes the notion of grand discourse style in Greco-Roman antiquity. Then he examines aspects of Jesus' farewell address (John 14-17) in light of this, concluding that Jesus' discourse is full of rhetorical devices used in the grand style of hellenistic orators. Such a finding does not negate the semitic influence on John, for the same can be said of Josephus and Philo. Nor should one dismiss the form as mere stylistic dressing because, in keeping with the instructions of the classical rhetoricians, it is suited to its substance as well. In fact, the style is "in precise synchronization with the peculiar dialectic ... (in) the Fourth Gospel's presentation of Jesus"—a "metahistorical rhetoric" for a "metahistorical christology" (p. 228).

Dunn takes a look at John's theology (Part Four) in his essay, "John and the Synoptics as a Theological Question." With all its distinctiveness, he argues that John's theological viewpoint is in continuity with the synoptic tradition. It did, however, develop differently, leading to diversity in the *one* gospel of Jesus Christ.

In the final section (Part Five), Meeks writes about "The Ethics of the Fourth Evangelist." He means to explore the use of John as a vehicle for moral development, since it does not contain explicit ethical principles nor allow an extraction of the author's own moral character. The gospel's presentation, which seems all wrong for moral formation, mirrors "a community that has been formed in the crucible of conflict" (p. 322). Loyalty to the community (viz. its social ethic) and to the Son of God that stands behind it represents ethical formation as a sectarian challenge to a dark and hostile—indeed in some sense an indicted—world. Nonetheless, the sect's task remained testimony, not violence as has so often been perpetrated in its name against Christianity's so-called enemies.

The function of a *Festschrift*, it seems to me, is to continue the dialogue with a respected conversation partner. That is not to suggest that

there is nothing new here. Some of the essayists push the envelope beyond previously argued positions (e.g. Charlesworth), others attempt to shift the perspective from which familiar problems are viewed (e.g. Gaventa). Indeed one contributor (Segovia) has taken the opportunity to reflect on his personal journey through various exegetical approaches, a comforting revelation to methodological neophytes who may be undergoing similar transitions and transformations.

This collection assumes some familiarity with the scholarly issues involved in the study of John. Nevertheless, its convenient division (into the five parts listed above) and the translation of ancient and modern foreign words and phrases wherever they occur make the book accessible to non-specialist students of Johannine literature. In addition, extensive indexes of Scripture and other ancient sources, ancient terms, and modern authors cited ably guide the reader through the volume.

—WILLIAM SANGER CAMPBELL
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

The Letters of Paul. By Charles B. Cousar. Interpreting Biblical Texts. Abingdon, 1996, 212 pages

In the 1980s Abingdon Press published a series of small but noteworthy volumes under the title "Interpreting Biblical Texts" that were designed, as the editors' foreword stated, "to identify and illustrate what is involved in relating the meaning of the biblical texts in their own times to their meaning in ours." These volumes, which together covered nearly the whole Bible, were written by prominent biblical scholars and teachers, and one volume of the original series is still in print. Now, some fifteen years later, Abingdon has begun to issue a new series under the same title and *The Letters of Paul* by Charles Cousar (who is also one of the General Editors of the new series) is one of three inaugural volumes.

The purpose of the new series remains similar to that of the first: "to help serious readers in their experience of reading and interpreting, to provide guides for their journeys into textual worlds" (p. 11). The focus, therefore, lies not so much in the historical context as it does in the text itself

and in the world of meaning created in the interaction of the text and contemporary readers. Abingdon's promotional literature says the volumes are "written to the student, not to the established scholar." While Cousar's book is not overly technical, it does demonstrate the complexity of the issues involved in reading Paul, summarize some of the debate within the scholarly community about various aspects of the Pauline letters, and provide ample footnotes and a bibliography for readers who wish to pursue matters further. The editors are correct to identify their intended audience as "serious readers."

Cousar's book is divided into two major parts and a shorter third. The first part addresses matters pertaining to reading the letters as a whole, including the genre and rhetorical style of Paul's letters; Paul's use of sources; sociological analysis of the churches to which Paul wrote; and the difficulty of constructing a Pauline theology. The five thematic chapters of the second part attempt to provide a "theological orientation" to what Cousar identifies as "the major theological themes" (p. 86) in the seven undisputed letters, including such matters as the dawn of the new age, the significance of the crucified Christ, the righteousness of God, God's trustworthiness and the destiny of Israel, sin, the law, metaphors for the atonement, dying and rising with Christ, the body of Christ, and flesh and spirit. The short third part quickly summarizes theological contributions of the deutero-Pauline letters. Additionally, Cousar provides structural outlines of all thirteen letters attributed to Paul.

The strengths of this book are manifold. The discussions of the letter genre and Paul's rhetorical style are both welcome, as these issues have not always received the attention they deserve in works on Paul. Cousar maintains a nice balance between presenting his own understanding of Paul and that of others in the scholarly community and frequently traces the history of scholarship on certain issues; for example, in discussing Paul's use of the hymn in Phil 2:5-11, he is particularly interested in how the hymn functions in its immediate context in Paul's letter, yet gives due attention to other questions scholars have asked about this hymn and the conclusions they have reached.

The first part of the book is exceptionally good, but I think Cousar is at his best in the second section, where he is actually engaging the theology of Paul's letters. He readily admits that he is not trying to be comprehensive, and undoubtedly other Pauline specialists would have chosen or organized matters somewhat differently. But nevertheless Cousar offers a

balanced treatment. His exegesis is consistently attentive to the rhetorical structure of the letters and markedly theological. He is to be commended for a job well done.

No doubt readers familiar with Paul's letters will find some minor weaknesses. I found his discussion of the difficult passages about women in 1 Corinthians (11:3-16 and 14:34-35; pp. 137-38) not fully satisfactory. The understanding of *kephalē* as "source" rather than "head" has come under critique (cf. Wayne Grudem, "The Meaning of Κεφαλή ('Head'): A Response to Recent Studies," *Trinity Journal* new series 11 (1990):3-72; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "*Kephalē* in I Corinthians 11:3," *Int* 47:1 (1993):52-59). Furthermore, his suggestion that 1 Cor 14:34-35 is an interpolation conveniently frees Cousar from interpreting it, despite his earlier claim that he is "investigating the theology of the *letters* of Paul and not the theology of Paul himself" (p. 86).

In examining the autobiographical statements in Gal. 1-2 (pp. 43-45), Cousar comes on a little too strong by setting a "rhetorical approach" over against a "historical approach." He consistently (and rightly) emphasizes the importance of the rhetoric and structure of the letters, but here implies that attempting to find any historical information—"mining for nuggets"—is inappropriate. Yet Cousar himself seems comfortable "mining for nuggets" pertaining to the sociological makeup of the churches to which Paul writes, which is a similar endeavor. He even uses some of the information in Gal 1-2 to make a historical judgment about Paul in the following chapter (p. 58). He is right that *merely* seeking historical information leaves the important task of *interpreting* Paul's letters untouched, but surely he does not intend to suggest that using the letters to discern what we can about historical matters is inappropriate.

These weaknesses are quite minor, and the only major weakness is the lack of a scripture index. Cousar has done a remarkably effective job in equipping the "serious reader" with the tools necessary to begin to understand and interpret Paul's letters. The book will serve quite well at the introductory level for students and also any reader interested in wrestling with Paul's letters. We can hope the rest of the books in the new Interpreting Biblical Texts series will be this good.

—WILLIAM L. W. PINCHES
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

The Missionary Movement In Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of the Faith. By Andrew Walls. Orbis Books, 1996, 266 pages.

It is unusual for a book to deliver more than its title promises. Yet this is what one gets in Andrew Walls' collection of essays, which span a twenty year period, on the transmission of the Christian faith. Walls, who studied patristics at Oxford under F. L. Cross, touches on an interesting range of disciplines: history, theology, biblical studies, Christian education, and comparative religions. What binds together his penetrating and seminal reflections is his grappling with the shock he received in 1960 when, as a missionary assigned to Sierra Leone to teach church history he realized, as he says, "that I, while happily pontificating on that patchwork quilt of diverse fragments that constitutes second-century Christian literature, was actually living in a second-century church. The life, worship and understanding of a community in its second century of Christian allegiance was going on all around me. Why did I not stop pontificating and observe what was going on?" (p. xiii). Walls did observe and reflect on the African church, which he discovered is not only the church of the past but also the church of the future. He has subsequently spent his professional life observing and reflecting on the way in which Christianity has been transmitted and received not only in 19th and 20th century Africa but throughout the religion's history. This book offers us some of the fruitful results of Walls' endeavor to understand the missionary movement in Christian history.

The essays in this book are divided into three sections of unequal length. Part one is entitled *The Transmission of The Christian Faith*, and the essays deal with the interaction between faith and culture as Christianity has been transmitted over space and time. Wonderful insights and suggestions abound in this section. Walls' periodization of Christian history according to particular geographical/cultural loci—Jewish, Hellenistic-Roman, Barbarian, Western Europe, Expanding Europe and Christian Recession, CrossCultural Christianity with the current importance of Latin America, Africa and Asia—is provocative, especially when he notes that at the end of each period the center and force of Christianity has moved to a new locus just before the old center has collapsed. His thoughts on the fundamental importance of translation in understanding the movement of the Christian faith through time and space, his insight into the necessary tension between the "indigenizing principle" and the "pilgrim principle" (pp. 7-9) as the Gospel is appropriated in different cultures and communities,

his assertion that the 'fullness of Christ' is increased as different peoples add their unique understandings of Christ to ours, are some of the many ideas worth pondering and developing.

The second section of the book, *Africa's Place in Christian History*, contains three essays. Walls provides some treatment of missonaries in Africa, but more treatment of the uniquely African aspects of African Christianity. In a field of study that has been characterized by a great deal of polemics, Walls is careful to examine as seriously and as sympathetically as possible the moods and motivations of both European missionaries and Africans, who were so often worlds apart. Readers with particular theological and political commitments may be dissatisfied with Walls' insistence upon upholding equally the integrity, and the frailty, of both European and African Christianity. His exposition of European evangelicalism, "a religion of protest against a Christian society that is not Christian enough," (p. 81) is highly illuminating for understanding missionary motives. His exposition of the African nature of African Christianity—with its indigenous evangelists, its use of African names of God, and its understandings of sickness, healing, sacraments, rituals, and the Bible—leads one to a greater appreciation of these great Christian communities. A chapter on "Primal Religious Traditions in Today's World" is to be commended for the seriousness with which these traditions are taken, as it carefully describes the complexities and flexibility of primal religions and the different ways in which they adapt to the modern world and religions.

Part Three of Walls' work, *The Missionary Movement,* is the largest, which is not surprising since it contains essays in his field of expertise. A number of essays are more strictly historical in character, describing missionaries and the movement associated with them in their home and foreign settings. In these essays interesting phenomena and links are explored; examples are the preponderance of medical missions in cultures highly resistant to the Christian message, and the effects of the missionary voluntary societies on the established church. A perspective on American missions from a European, who quotes a Japanese, is instructive to those of us living on the western side of the Atlantic. Other essays delve into other disciplines. Walls is highly interested in theological education for both "Northern" and "Southern" Christians. He rues the lack of interest of Western theological studies in the traditions of the majority of Christians in the world: "Western theology... resembles Singapore in 1942: though well equipped with heavy weaponry, most of it points in the wrong direc-

tion." (p. 148) He feels that Christian students from Africa, Latin America and Asia are not being well served by Northern seminaries: "In the North we have a confident, if rather tired, tradition of theology, bearing the fossil marks of Western history and culture plainly upon it. We then sell this to students from the Southern continents as though the fossil marks were not there." (p. 158) He calls for a mutual sharing of resources and ideas between North and South; Christianity is for the church universal.

Walls' book, though aimed primarily at students and teachers of missions and Third World church history, thus has provocative suggestions for thinkers in a number of disciplines. Because this book is a collection of essays written over a period of time, there are sections of essays which have information and thoughts previously raised. This repetition did not bother me, although it might others. In fact at times I was glad to see points made in passing more fully developed in other essays. Walls has a marvelous and engaging writing style. I was, however, bothered by the generally non-inclusive language, made more noticeable by the paucity of references to women's particular history and experience in the church. In his "Preface" Walls tells us that he has striven "with only partial success and without wholesale re-writing, to adopt more inclusive gender language, as far as this is attainable by one who learned his writing in a less enlightened age." (p. xi) A good editor might have been able to assist him further. If we are willing, however, to "translate" Walls' message into our own medium, we shall find that it greatly enriches our understanding of the course of Christian history and of the nature of the church universal.

— ARUN W. JONES
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Crusaders against Opium: Protestant Missionaries in China 1874-1917. By Kathleen L. Lodwick. The University Press of Kentucky, 1996, 185 pages.

The topic of Kathleen L. Lodwick's book, *Crusaders against Opium,* is an important one not only for historians of mission or historians of China, but also for sociologists and others interested in why and how people al-

low and even participate in the victimization and oppression of others. In this book, Lodwick looks at the roles of the Chinese people and government officials, the British merchants and government officials, and the Western missionary community in either perpetuating or suppressing the use of opium in China between 1874 and 1917. During this period there was a major turnaround in both Chinese and British policy, largely due, she argues, to pressure from the missionaries.

Opium is believed to have come to China perhaps as early as the seventh century or as late as the sixteenth century (p. 11) In the eighteenth century both its use and its importation were illegal in China, but still both usage and imports increased drastically. There are no sure counts of the number of opium addicts in China by the end of the nineteenth century, but estimates range from approximately two-thirds of one percent of the population to around ten percent of the population. Initially, many Europeans, including some missionaries, defended the Chinese people's use of opium, arguing that the Chinese were physiologically different from Europeans and thus, whereas opium was seen as dangerous for Westerners, it was deemed necessary for Chinese life. It is Lodwick's detailing of such ignorant and imperialistic views that makes this book both interesting and frightening. I found myself repeatedly drawing analogies to issues of drugs, difference, and morality today. For instance, she records the following statement of Dr. Henry M. McCandliss, an American Presbyterian missionary, concerning the Chinese and opium: "I think [opium] is the judgment of God on a dishonest race" (p. 48). Sadly, we still hear such prejudiced statements today concerning crack cocaine and AIDS. We also still see evidence of human greed as people willingly impoverish or victimize others to make a profit.

In this work, Lodwick has tackled a complex historical issue. There were many parties involved in the creation, continuation, and, finally, in the suppression of the opium trade. She recounts individually the narratives of three different groups around the opium issue: the missionaries, the pro-opium forces and the anti-opium forces. The strength of this approach is that it allows her to give detailed examination of each constituency. The weakness of the approach is that these are not separate stories, but interwoven stories and telling them separately leads to redundancy and confuses the reader's sense of chronology. This is more a problem in the early chapters, however, and lessens by the latter part of the book.

In the end, Lodwick concludes, simple self-interest ruled in the opium issue and it determined the stance of each constituency. The British and Indian merchants sought to insure their livelihoods; the British government sought to maintain its tax revenue; the Chinese government sought to maintain its self-image and dignity; the Chinese farmers and merchants sought to earn their own livelihoods; and the missionaries sought to be able to do their work of conversion. The missionaries had learned very quickly that opium addicts made very poor and rather insincere converts. In addition, they eventually found that as foreigners, both they themselves and, more importantly, their religion were associated with the opium trade and its horrible effects on Chinese life.

It was not until the early 1900s that the interests of the original pro-opium constituencies shifted sufficiently so that most of the parties could agree to work together to suppress the opium trade. A majority of the Chinese people became convinced that opium was a social evil which had to be removed to improve their society, even if the process was painful. Through participation in international drug conferences, the Chinese government realized that China was not the only nation with a drug problem and so they could admit their problem without feeling disgraced. What's more, they found that they could earn international respect for attacking this problem head on. In addition, a majority of British citizens, including merchants and government representatives, came to accept the anti-opium lobby's position that opium was dangerous and that participating in its distribution was morally reprehensible, and in short, a sin. The coinciding of these shifts together with the continued outcries of the missionaries against the opium trade enabled the dismantling of the wide scale international opium trade with China.

Lodwick concludes her book by discussing evidence related to the degree of completeness in the suppression of opium. She also discusses the barriers to complete suppression. She finds that the suppression was neither complete nor without its consequences, but that it was dramatic.

Lodwick's research is extensive and thorough. In addition to an impressive list of sources published in the United States during the time period of her study, she has also utilized both British and Chinese primary sources. She includes analyses of the reports from the major conferences and surveys by both the British and the missionaries, bringing out key differences in interpretation of the situation. If she errs, it is at times in providing too much detail, especially in reporting lists of numbers, when an

interpretational statement would be easier reading in the main body of the text. All in all, Lodwick provides a great deal of information on a topic that has often been treated more superficially in shorter works.

During the time of the extensive opium trade, J. Hudson Taylor, the founder and leader of the China Inland Mission, is recorded to have said, "Ah! we have given China something besides the Gospel, something that is doing more harm in a week than the united efforts of all our Christians are doing good in a year. Oh, the evils of opium!" (p. 172) This book is interesting reading for the historian and student of mission as well as for other Christians who take seriously Jesus' command to spread the Gospel. It raises questions about the limits and perceptions of traditional missionary work, but it also speaks about the power and effectiveness of advocacy.

—DEBRA DUKE MOSIER
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

The Church as Polis: From Political Theology to Theological Politics as Exemplified by Jürgen Moltmann and Stanley Hauerwas. By Arne Rasmusson. University of Notre Dame Press, 1995. 418 pages.

Those working at the intersection of theology, ethics, and politics will be rewarded by reading Arne Rasmusson's *The Church as Polis*: not necessarily because of his thesis, but rather because of his elucidation of the major issues and problems located at the nexus of these three disciplines and his lengthy exposition of two influential contemporary figures—Jürgen Moltmann and Stanley Hauerwas. This book is well researched and well argued and presents a challenge both to Moltmann's supporters and Hauerwas's detractors.

Rasmusson's sympathies and thesis are presented clearly from the outset. He argues that political theology (especially as exemplified by Moltmann) contains severe internal tensions which its inner logic cannot correct, and, consequently, "problems in the actual use of political theology for interpreting and guiding the life of the church in the modern world arise" (p. 14). Moreover, he claims that the problems faced by political theology can be overcome by contemporary Radical Reformation theology (as exemplified by Hauerwas's "theological politics") which is "not

only more coherent," but can also "better deal with the challenges to the church that modernity poses," because of its "more powerful interpretive tools" and "more realistic and practical" account of the church's life (p. 38).

After an introduction to political theology, Radical Reformation theology, and a chapter on method in part one of the book, in part two Rasmusson presents a critical description of Moltmann's "political theology" which illustrates the impasse inherent in his theological project. Rasmusson argues that Moltmann's base for theological reflection is consistently the current political climate rather than the church as an independent entity; hence, his theology has undergone rather severe changes through the past four decades. In Moltmann's earlier work one found a largely unchallenged assumption of progress and an acceptance of modernity which led to a highly formal and abstract ethics in which the church's role was to act as a progressive agent in the political realm. In Moltmann's later work one finds a tempered view of progress and, in many cases, a critique of modernity that is coupled with a more concrete "ecclesial discipleship ethics" emerging from a church that acts as a "contrast society" to the dominant culture. According to Rasmusson, Moltmann tries to maintain both of these positions simultaneously. In other words, there is within Moltmann's political theology a logical and practical impasse in his aspiration that the church be a progressive political force within society (through its active participation in social movements) *and* that the church be a contrast society (in its *difference* from dominant culture).

The most original and creative section of this book is Rasmusson's discussion of political theology and the New Social Movements (chapter 8). In this section he uses the descriptive sociological work of Karl Gabriel (for the German context) and Robert Wuthnow (for the American context) in conjunction with Ronald Inglehart's explanation of the Postmaterialist thesis to argue that Moltmann's theology—far from its claimed direct relation with the poor and oppressed—is in reality a New Class/Postmaterialist theology (i. e., connected with an upper-middle class, educated elite, highly concerned with quality of life) that does not adequately deviate from, or challenge the values and political agendas of, this stratum of political and social elites. Rasmusson uses this discussion to solidify his argument that Moltmann's political theology faces a contradiction in its support for a church allied with the politically powerful for the purpose of progressive action and its support for a church that acts as

a contrast society. Regardless of whether one agrees with the analysis, this chapter is original and worthy of attention.

In part three of the book, Rasmusson offers an extensive and sympathetic description of Hauerwas's "theological politics" as a better alternative to Moltmann's political theology. This section (chapters 9-15) represents the most valuable contribution of the book. Hauerwas undeniably helps shape many of the most pressing debates in contemporary Christian ethics. Yet, because Hauerwas has chosen the essay as his preferred mode of expression and also has a propensity towards hyperbole, individual essays on particular ethical dilemmas (when divorced from Hauerwas's corpus) can seem baffling. Furthermore, even those familiar with Hauerwas's larger body of work often find that individual essays appear incongruous when compared with other aspects of his work. For this reason, Rasmusson's systematic and well-organized treatment of Hauerwas's seemingly non-systematic "theological politics" should be welcomed by Hauerwas's friends and foes alike. Rasmusson's basic argument is that Hauerwas's "theological politics" provides the resources to overcome the impasse of political theology and demonstrates what Moltmann's theology could look like if he allowed his themes of "ecclesial discipleship ethics" and the church as "contrast society" to become primary. This section also includes a helpful discussion of the genealogy of the charge of sectarianism that has been made against Hauerwas and John Howard Yoder by those following in the footsteps of Ernst Troeltsch and the Niebuhr brothers.

The Church as Polis is a strongly argued book. Yet when Rasmusson summarizes the work of others he goes too far in safeguarding that the reader will accept his thesis. His persistence in highlighting the inherent contradictions, hermeneutical problems, and practical pitfalls in all areas of Moltmann's political theology leads the reader (with just cause) to question whether he is being too selective in the components of Moltmann's work investigated. Furthermore, Rasmusson's criticisms are often coupled with pronouncements foreshadowing how—if Moltmann would take a slightly different turn in the direction of the (as yet not fully explained) Radical Reformation theology—these problems would be avoided. Rasmusson is equally guilty in the opposite direction. While his explication of Moltmann highlights inconsistencies, his explication of Hauerwas (though very good) glosses over areas of Hauerwas's work that are obviously self-contradictory.

Many people will take exception to Rasmusson's treatment of Moltmann, and even those who accept the tensions in Moltmann's political theology may doubt that Hauerwas's theological politics provides the best alternative. One can easily argue that Moltmann could highlight his non-apologetic Barthian side and his discipleship oriented (Bonhoeffer) side without embracing Hauerwas's theological politics. Rasmusson's criticisms and proposals are, however, challenging and thought provoking. This book is of particular value to theologians and ethicists because of its lucid summary of key problems at the nexus of theology, ethics, and politics and its exposition of the work of Stanley Hauerwas.

—CHRISTOPHER S. D. ROGERS
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Judaism in Persia's Shadow: A Social and Historical Approach. By Jon L. Berquist. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995, v + 282 pages.

One of the interesting developments in recent Old Testament studies has been the burgeoning appearance of studies on the Persian period. Jon L. Berquist has now added to the growing corpus of works on that era this interesting volume. As the subtitle indicates, Berquist's method is "historical sociology." Because this singular approach is both what defines the book and what makes it interesting, this review will focus on the method. Berquist arrived at this method after he became convinced that he "had to understand the society of the ancient world to make sense of the history and of the literature, and the study of society required the tools of sociology." The book is essentially an attempt to answer a single question: "How did Judah's transformation into Yehud, the Persian colony, affect its ideology, its self-understanding, its religion, and its rhetoric, and how did this new form of religion work both to maintain and to oppose the society in which it took this shape?" (p. iv)

Berquist lays out his methodological presuppositions in an appendix. There he writes: "Historical sociology depends on the same evidence as ancient history but combines this evidence with an understanding of the typical patterns of human societies. In the case of colonial Yehud and imperial Persia, the historical evidence allows for sociological analysis that

reflects the nature of other empires and colonies *in other locations and periods*" (pp. 242-43, emphasis added). Thus Berquist develops a model of how empires relate to their colonies and applies this model to the interaction between Persia and Yehud. He goes on to explain the ideology, religion and rhetoric of the Old Testament in light of this reconstructed interaction. His reconstruction of the interaction between Persia and Yehud owes a great deal to the work of Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt. For Eisenstadt, societies create "boundary mechanisms" such as bureaucracy, rituals, and law as "impromptu attempt[s] to legitimate a specific social action...." Later, these impromptu mechanisms develop into autonomous agencies. Societal "elites exercise control of the society through organizations as well as coercion" (p. 243). Berquist applies Eisenstadt's theories: "Religion forms a boundary mechanism...that develops into an autonomous institution through the development of an empire, as certain elites use the religion for their own legitimation" (p. 244).

As Berquist admits, this method has problems. Since Eisenstadt's work was with medieval empires, applying the model to the Persian period is questionable. Berquist also admits that Eisenstadt himself was uncomfortable with "the flaws inherent in his dependence on functionalism." As a friend of mine likes to say, "If your only tool is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail." Berquist's hammer is his functional model. Every contour in the biblical text becomes his nail. Third, the historical data available to Berquist is not always conducive to sociological approaches. We cannot, for example, poll the long dead populace to learn about their religious practices and beliefs. Since Berquist's model assumes (probably correctly) that the biblical texts were produced by religious elites, he has to supply sociological data from other eras, assuming that humans are essentially the same in every time and locale. Fourth, Berquist relies on a textual approach. He does not draw much on inscriptional or epigraphical data. Given the self-consciously sociological methodology, this is a weakness.

Berquist structures his work into two main parts (parts II and III, respectively, according to the Table of Contents). First, he investigates the politics and developments of each of the Persian emperors: Cyrus, Cambyses, Darius, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes. He does this because of his assumption that the main force operating in Yehud was the Persian empire. This section is interesting reading and I commend it to anyone interested in the period.

In what biblical scholars will consider the heart of the book, Berquist discusses the institutions and literature of colonial Yehud. Because of his overarching functional model, Berquist often argues that biblical texts are expressions of the Persian empire's effort to control the populace. For example, Berquist argues that in Jerusalem the temple functioned to equate God's will with the political will of the societal elite. That is, the temple legitimated the elite's control of Yehud. Or, for example, Berquist proposes that the Pentateuch came into being (in current form) as result of the Persian empire desire to promote its own agenda. He conjectures that "Darius assembled these materials and promulgated them in order to support his own imperial project of legal standardization... the Persian Empire *published* these documents in an attempt to maintain social order and to define the Yehudites by their own distinctive legal codes..." (p. 138). Or, for example, the Sabbath was introduced as a social institution "to sense solidarity and to thank the powers that grant the time of rest" (p. 143). Likewise the priestly "capture of religion" which was allowed by the empire was a form of control, as the development of the wisdom tradition was for the purpose of social control. In one boldly creative interpretation, Berquist argues: "Both praise and lament psalms legitimate the social order" (p. 201). The praise psalms praise God's violence, legitimating the empire's use of violence to control the populace. The purpose of the lament psalms was to deny the sufferer's pain: "Because [the psalms say that] God will soon act, there is little need to dwell on the people's negative experiences of the moment" (p. 201). In other words, the lament psalms deny pain in order to control "the social order." Readers have to admit that these interpretations are nothing if not creative.

While I disagreed frequently with Berquist's interpretations of the biblical data, I nevertheless found his study engaging. Berquist assumes a breathtaking ability of the empire to manipulate social structures simultaneously on micro and macro levels. Whether or not Berquist's more adventurous proposals will be accepted only time will tell.

—ROLF A. JACOBSON
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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